# ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FRASER.

A Sketch of his Life and Philosophical position.

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# INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION

zur

## Erlangung der Doktorwürde

der

hohen philosophischen Fakultät

der

## Friedrich-Alexanders-Universität zu Erlangen

vorgelegt von

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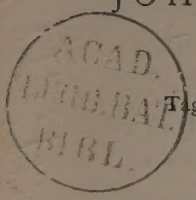

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 26 Feb. 1909

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY R. ANDERSON & SON, 11 CHAMBERS STREET.

1909.

# CONTENTS


PART I.

PAGE

Short biographical sketch - - 7

His personal character and philosophic importance - 14

PART II.

HIS PHILOSOPHIC POSITION.

Introduction - - - - - - 17

Human knowledge is trustworthy but inadequate; the position to be developed - - - - 18

The meaning and validity of common-sense - - 19

Can we really know reality? Phenomenalism and subjective idealism rejected - - - 22

The character of, and necessity for "Philosophic Faith" - - - - - - 27

Complete personal experience the only clue for interpreting reality - - - - - 37

The three-fold articulation of reality - - - 41

The constitution and functions of matter - - 43

Man's place in the cosmos - - - - 45

The divine in its relation to the human - - 50

Evil: the enigma of theism - - - - 55

Progress and theistic optimism - - - 59

The place of miracles in a theistic universe - - 61

The mystery of death - - - - - 63

PART III.

Summary of Fraser's position: His relation to British speculation - - - - - 66

Bibliography - - - - - - 76

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness; let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster."

TENNYSON. "IN MEMORIAM."

# I. SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FRASER, D.C.L. Oxford; LL.D. Princeton, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen; Litt.D. Dublin; etc., emeritus professor of logic and metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, claims as his birthplace the manse of Ardchattan in the year 1819. In that lonely and romantic spot in the land of Lorne in Argyllshire he lived as one of a family of ten sons for fourteen years. A youth of Celtic descent, surrounded by wild and legend-haunted scenery, remote from the busy, hurrying world, whose echoes only reached him mellowed by an ecclesiastical haze, he early withdrew into himself. This self-centredness was accentuated by his weak health, which limited his schooldays to one year and substituted therefor the private tuition of the village schoolmaster. A temporary indifference or even distaste for the classical languages was fostered by a mechanical method of imparting their glories, but history proved more congenial to his temperament, while popular astronomy was eagerly perused, to the prejudice of his father's orthodox Biblical instruction. At the age of fourteen he entered the University of Glasgow, a shy, raw, sensitive youth. "Happily," he says of his boyish matriculation "the custom is different now."[1] Even thus early he became acquainted with the philosophy of Berkeley, the greatest influence in the formulation of his own world-intuition (Weltanschauung), which caused a revisal of his childish naturalism. He transferred his allegiance in 1834 to the University of Edinburgh, which he was to adorn later as successor to Hamilton in the chair of Logic and Metaphysics.

[1] Reid and Hamilton both commenced study at the tender age of twelve.

In contrast to the brilliance of philosophical speculation abroad, Scotland was but poorly served, for Sir W. Hamilton had but lately (in 1829) begun to publish, and the Scottish school was in a state of inanition. In the lack of satisfactory positive teaching, the feared and abused scepticism of David Hume laid strong hold on our student, and only the Scottish proverbial level-headedness saved him from adopting a complete agnosticism. Through the saner influence of Berkeley and Coleridge, however, "the conception of an originating cause as essentially efficient and teleological, exemplified only in acts of intending will, was beginning (in 1838) to supersede the mechanical conception due to Brown and Hume."[1] Meanwhile, introduced to the then little known and grievously misunderstood Königsberger, "a dualism [of the natural and moral orders] partly suggested by Kant was now coming dimly into view."[2] Contemporaneously, he was drawn through Reid and Hamilton to regard Common-sense philosophically criticised as the only trustworthy source and guide of human knowledge and action.

After his graduation as Magister Artium in 1838, he gravitated naturally into the theological faculty as a student of *scientia scientiarum*. There he was confronted with the denunciatory eloquence of Thomas Chalmers, the most brilliant Scottish Theologian of his day and the leader of the "Disruption" from the Scottish Established Church in 1843. Yet he found Chalmer's philosophical basis not altogether satisfactory. "The inconsistency of theism even with an unbeginning universe seemed not self-evident. Then, too, the inductive inference of the perfect goodness of the Supreme Power, on the basis of our experience on this planet of a strange mixture of evil and good, seemed to involve the fallacy of resting an infinite conclusion upon a finite experience involving contradictory facts."[3]

[1] Biog. Phil., p. 54. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 59. [3] Biog. Phil., p. 64.

This criticism is interesting when read in the light of his own later ontological belief, the keynote of which is struck even thus early in his appreciation of Butler's influence upon him. "Man *may* accept the mysteries that are involved in intellectual finitude; but he cannot, under any conditions, accept what he clearly perceives to be irrational."[1] This 'may' is transformed into the 'must' of philosophical faith in his own meditations.

In the same year he was successful in gaining the prize for the university essay on "Toleration." His point of view was broad and advanced, and based on (1) "thoughts about the finitude of human understanding, the very various degrees of individual intelligence, and the narrow opportunities for experience that are within the reach of mankind,"[2] and (2) If the ideal of the action of the state—in respect to the Church—were conformity to the moral judgments of "*all*" its individual members, it must abide in a careful neutrality. Any interference would lead consistently to a high-handed and unjustifiable repression of the views opposed to that which it had arbitrarily decided to uphold. A curious contrast is provided by his essay which won the Pitt Prize in 1839. The subject was "The vindication of the infallible authority of the Bible," and his conclusions reflect his own ultimate philosophical attitude, which a critic calls "a covert version of the Christian faith." He was certainly led by his studies on this theme, which he answered liberally indeed for his time, to the bed-rock of his life-long meditations. "Historical evidence," he finds, "gives only probability. Even proved physical miracles are not an absolutely certain foundation as long as the moral character of the Supreme Power is uncertain; for then the miracles may be meant to deceive us."[3] This dependence of physical science on moral postulates and the vindication of the former only through an

[1] Op. cit., p. 67. [2] Op. cit., p. 78. [3] Biog. Phil., p. 92.

invincible philosophical faith in the latter occupied his thought thoughout the whole of his career.

An ecclesiastical revolution was meanwhile imminent. The underground rumblings of the forces of progress and so-called ecclesiastical liberty, gathering in strength and volume through the years from 1838-43, culminated at length in the latter year in the exodus of the dissentient majority from the Established Church, and the foundation of the "Free Church." Fraser's sentiments, already influenced by his cogitation on "Toleration," by the example of his Puritan father, and the personal magnetism of Chalmers, inclined him in the direction in which he expected to find wider opportunities and unbridled freedom. For three years he acted as minister at Cramond, near Edinburgh, but in 1846 gladly, if diffidently, accepted the chair of Logic in the New College of the Free Church; "gladly" for "one found that individual liberty might be in inverse ratio to the freedom of the social organism in which the individual is included,"[2] yet inspired by the conception of a "great, free university founded on the broad and deep principles of humanity in union with Christianity."[1] In combination with the work of this chair, he edited the *North British Review* from 1850-56, to which he contributed six philosophical essays, afterwards collected and published in 1856, under the title "Essays in Philosophy." These formed part of his recommendation to follow Sir W. Hamilton. From the editorial post he resigned in 1856. By his special request Isaac Taylor had contributed a liberal and advanced article on Chalmer's Theology, which was made the subject of bigoted attack, approved of by the proprietors of the periodical. To preserve his freedom of thought and expression Fraser dissociated himself from official connection with such a retrograde and obscurantist policy and organ. The proposal of the most influential contributors that he should

[1] Op. cit., p. 119. [2] Biog. Phil. p. 127.

inaugurate a new Scottish Quarterly was unadopted because of his election to succeed Hamilton in the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh and the pressing duties which thereby devolved upon him.

During the next thirty-five years he had to steer his bark through the conflicting phases of thought darkening the horizon at his appointment. "On the one hand there was scientific Naturalism, with its dogmatic assumption of progressive and regressive evolution as final synthesis,—all beyond this the darkness of the Unknowable. On the other side was the new Gnostic Idealism, bound by its profession to eliminate all mysteries and at last to reach infinite science of reality."[1] He never wearies of emphasizing the *via media* he chose His philosophy appears like a coy maiden on the path of common-sense, seduced not by the allurements of a fictitious omniscience, nor terror-stricken by the threats of nescience. Or like an Indian god the complete personal experience stands facing both ways. Knowledge is not ashamed of its intermediacy but boasteth not itself, is not puffed up. Neither scepticism nor gnosticism of any sort can ever undermine its faith in itself or overcome its indubitable finitude.

Well-known as an ardent student and follower of Berkeley, two essays on his philosophy in the early sixties determined the Oxford Clarendon Press to request Fraser to edit Berkeley's works. The arduous task was completed in 1871 with an edition which awakened anew the dormant interest in the positive elements of Berkeley's thought. From this time Fraser's name is almost always coupled with Berkeley's, and, indeed, the above labour of love, combined with "Life, Letters, and Unpublished Writings of Berkeley" (1871), afterwards popularised and revised for Blackwood's Philosophical Classics (1881), and the

[1] Op. cit. p. 184

widely read annotated "Selections from Berkeley" (1874) gives him some right to this unique conjunction.

The following years were passed quietly in academic instruction without the feverish zeal of the present generation to appear in print. "Sundry articles in reviews and encyclopædias, and some minor miscellaneous essays form my scanty tale of literary work in the eighties."[1] Yet the records of reconstruction and development of the university, from its arousal from dogmatic self-content in 1859, could tell a story of active administrative ability. For thirty-two years, during fourteen of which he was a representative of the Senate on the University Court, he, as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, took a leading part in the expanding and modernizing of his *alma mater*, until it became renowned throughout the British Empire and America.

In the year before his retiral (1890), he appears again in the capacity of biographer with "Locke" for Blackwood's Philosophical Classics, and it was fitting that the triology of characteristic British representatives should be rounded off by a sketch of "Thomas Reid" in the "Famous Scots" series in 1898. A monumental edition of Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" followed in 1894. In this latter year he was appointed for two years "Lecturer in Natural Theology, in the widest sense of the term," under Lord Gifford's trust deed. Professor Pfleiderer is the name which appears directly before Fraser's on the list of distinguished lecturers. Although hastily and unexpectedly called upon, these lectures are clearly reasoned out and illuminative expositions of his position as recorded from germ to bud in the writings of fifty years. In fact there is a good deal of verbal incorporation from his previous articles. If somewhat diffuse, they recommend themselves by reason of their lucidity of thought, forcibleness of

[1] Biog. Phil., p. 265.

expression, and the deep moral earnestness which pervades them. Their importance lies mainly in their sober conservatism and in their deep and insistent call to the venture of a theistic faith which shall transcend knowledge. A new edition "amended and purged of redundancies" appeared in one volume in 1899.

His only other considerable contribution to literature is his "Biographia Philosophica." A smooth and quietly meandering autobiography published in his eighty-fifth year, it exhibits the peace and mildness of vision which come to a man of faith when he has withdrawn from active strife, yet loves to wander amid the shades of former fights and reconstruct the stirring scenes. He still lives on in retirement at Hawthornden, not far from the arena of his labours, a bowed, white-haired old man, soon to test the truth of his own comfort and expectations. Brain and mind have not yet declined their functions, for he has just written a small handbook, "Berkeley and Spiritual Realism," cursorily expounding his relation to his beloved master.

His attitude and life work could not be better epitomised than in these sentences from his only really constructive work.[1] "*Deus illuminatio nostra.* It follows that the highest end of the life of persons on this planet, during the uncertain interval between conscious birth and death, under this [theistic] final conception of the realities of existence, is the deepening and enlightening of moral and theistic faith and hope, through increasing discernment of spiritual law in the natural world—the elevating, emotional expression of this faith in religious gratitude and aspiration—with practical outcome in that approximation to its divine ideal which those present who 'do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.'"

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. II., p. 282.

## HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER AND PHILOSOPHIC IMPORTANCE.

No ambitious speculator.

Despite the systematic explication which the philosophical doctrines of Fraser permit because of the consistent life-long concentration upon a single attitude, he will not be remembered as a striking figure in the arena of thought. As he himself so frequently confesses, his standpoint and conclusions consist but of a critical restatement of what everyone but the philosopher knows immediately and accepts. No dazzling edifice erected out of brilliant but fragile speculations meets the eye, but a solid, substantial British mansion, every stone tested, and the whole cemented together by common-sense and faith. He is profoundly convinced of the futility of attempting to rethink the entire concatenation of existence from an absolute standpoint in the fashion of Liebniz, Spinoza, or Hegel. The limitations of human knowledge are reverently respected. "My inclination [from the first] was to an English manner of treatment, so far as it keeps firm hold of what is given in concrete experience, under conditions of place and time, and refuses to pursue a unity that is possible for men only in a world of abstractions. I seemed to feel that in philosophy all things must *at last* be 'left abrupt,' as Bacon puts it."[1] While paramountly possessed of the keen Scottish faculty of adjusting, criticising, speculating, his genius is touched with the warmer air of the dominant partner. He can find, indeed, "less satisfaction in the *practical* solution of intellectual difficulties than might be exhibited in the south,"[2] yet his shrewd common-sense guarded him from the opposite extreme of abstract system. Thus his name will not be mentioned among the magnificent failures or the architectonic minds of speculative

[1] Biog. Phil., p. 138. [2] Essays in Philosophy III., p. 138.

construction, but rather as an earnest and unwearied seeker after truth, and an inspiring teacher.

A typical philosophic lecturer,

In remembering him a well-known Scottish novelist writes: "In appearance and in habit of thought he is an ideal philosopher, and his communings with himself have lifted him to a level of serenity that is worth struggling for." "You do not sit under the man without seeing his transparent honesty and feeling that he is genuine."[1] As indicating, again, Fraser's strong metaphysical leanings even towards his elementary class, the same writer humourously, yet caressingly, records how he can "see him rising in a daze from his chair and putting his hand through his hair. 'Do I exist,' he said, thoughtfully, 'strictly so-called?'"[2]

of reverent Christian faith.

Brought up in a devout, and even stern, Christian home and educated for the ministry, he never lost his reverence for the divine incomprehensibility. His position as professor in a Scottish theological college and then in the greatest Scottish university, with its large responsibility and noblesse oblige, only increased in him his native humility. His soul ever responded to the warm touch of Christian doctrine and he lived his own beliefs in a child-like trust. He warns us against a divorce of life and knowledge. "The motives of religion and duty which find their highest appropriate stimulus in the department of truth which regards God and our relations to Him, ought not to be separated from a love for abstract truth."[3] These words remind us of the marvellous conjunction of speculation and reverence in the "God-intoxicated" Spinoza. He himself, of a splendid candour in the search for the answers to the "deeper questionings of sense and higher things," never lost his conviction of duty to himself and to his God. In this humble and pious spirit he influenced several generations of students

[1] J. M. Barrie, "An Edinburgh Eleven," p. 59. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[3] Essays II., p. 69.

while universities and public bodies were heaping unsolicited honours upon him.

His revivifying influence as editor of Berkeley and Locke.

His chief claim to remembrance will be, however, as the painstaking editor of Berkeley and of Locke's "Essay" with their thoughtful explanations and annotations. He was instrumental in bringing to our knowledge Berkeley's youthful diary and in exposing the true inwardness of his teaching. As to this latter, his distinguished pupil and successor says of him, in noting the close approximation to Kant exhibited in Berkeley's "Siris"; "But 'Siris' was without influence upon English thought,—at all events till the present generation, which has reaped the fruit of Professor Fraser's loving care."[1] He himself fully realised the need of, and expressed his intention to render, this service to Berkeley. "That those [earlier] writings, as more accommodated than his later works to the course of thought in Europe in the last century, were treated as Berkeley's only writings, may excuse the one-sided representation of his theory of knowledge and existence, which has long been accepted. But it is time it should be conceived in its fulness and that we should remember the sacrifices of his "later growth" as well as the "first fruits" at the "altar of truth."[2] And again "[Berkeley's teaching] has come to be interpreted as universal immaterialism, but without its reconstructive spiritual consciousness and intellectualism."[3] In like manner he emphasised the positive tendency of Locke's fourth book, and awakened a recrudescence of the study of British philosophy in opposition to an eclectic restatement, with modifications, of German speculation.

[1] Seth Pringle-Pattison, "Scottish Philosophy," p. 42. [2] "Berkeley" in B.P.C., pp. 95-96. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

## II. HIS PHILOSOPHIC POSITION.

### INTRODUCTION.

His philosophy shows one continuous development.

IN Fraser's philosophic publications he makes no attempt at detailed description of a system with all its ramifications which should include the whole range of human knowledge. On the other hand there is a marked continuous treading of the heights of ultimate being in all his writings, which lends to his results a certain concentration and permits us to unfold them systematically without irrelevant digressions. From the very earliest beginnings until the culmination fifty years after, he has pursued one steady line of development. Imbued with a theistic solution of reality he has but elaborated and deepened his original theme without ever finding cause for hesitation. It is, indeed, seldom—and perhaps better so—that a philosopher retains his pristine views unchanged through a long career, but, having weathered the shocks of Hume and of Sir W. Hamilton, of Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel at the outset, he stood on a rock too firm to fall with any blows, however more rounded or even it might become.

His own theories only fully and systematically shaped after fifty years' contemplation.

In his introduction to the course of lectures of the winter session of 1857 he explains his object. "The following course professes to offer *proof* that Real Existence is ultimately incomprehensible by finite intelligence. It concludes that we are bound, both by our speculative and moral faith to believe what we cannot comprehend in thought."[1] He complained, however, that there existed a lack of any Scottish book inculcating this doctrine, although we might have expected that Reid's Works or those of Sir W. Hamilton would have partially satisfied him. "An adjustment of these questions, capable of explaining the manner in which the human understanding is enabled to rise, on the ladder of available

[1] Rational Philosophy, p. 60.

evidence, from the relative and finite phenomena of the mental and material worlds, to the region of religion or the supernatural, and which should also be in analogy with the Scottish philosophical account of our notions and original judgments respecting the qualities of mind and matter, would supplement what is still a defect in our national metaphysics."[1] Although thirty years later (1885) Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison could still complain that "the absence of a native ontology is a thing to be regretted,"[2] the Gifford lectures gave Fraser an opportunity of sketching in outline the course by which he deemed such a requirement ought to be fulfilled, even while its form and details may have been circumscribed by the exigencies of the occasion.

In the following discussion we have adopted a scheme, which groups together the opinions of all his works in a logical relation without violating any. It enables us to consider the constituents apart, a convenience which compensates for their occasional forceful separation. Aside from this he will be left for the most part to tell his own story. In accordance with the method accentuated by Locke and Kant he bases his conclusions on an epistemological theory, but like the Scottish philosophers and Kant's successors he supplies the necessary complement by an ontology. His theory of knowing forms everywhere the presupposition and background of his theory of being.

## HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IS TRUSTWORTHY BUT INADEQUATE.

There can be no more condensed statement of his epistemological position than in this summary of his own. "Reason [and not reasoning] thus presents two corresponding faculties or organs for the apprehension of real beings:—Intuition [= Perception] and Experience, governed by the logical and associative

[1] Essays in Philosophy II., p. 167. [2] Scottish Philosophy, p. 214.

laws; and Faith, to whose object as transcendent, the relations of human knowledge cannot be applied. The problem of Metaphysics . . . may be put thus:—Given Experience and Faith . . . to account for actual human knowledge."[1]

The following points may be emphasised for further notice. (1) The Reason, which constitutes the final criterion is synonymous with the Common Reason of mankind, or in the language of the Scottish school "Common-Sense." (2) The recognition of the objective reference of knowledge as not to be doubted; "the apprehension of *real* beings" with Common-sense philosophy. Combined with this is the correction of the phenomenalism and associationism of Hume. (3) The assertion of the legitimacy of the content of faith and its co-ordinative validity with the experiential faculty—sense interpreted by understanding—as an articulator of ultimate reality. This becomes in the end a hegemony of moral faith over knowledge. (4) The consequent admission of our final impotence fully to "know" reality, with the implied necessity of accepting the transcendent hypothesis of faith.

## THE MEANING AND VALIDITY OF COMMON-SENSE.

Common-sense is not synonymous with uneducated opinion, but with the ultimately rational attitude of the philosopher.

The unwarranted odium and ridicule which the term "commonsense," has excited in philosophers from Kant and Priestley to the present day, results, in the main, from its meaning and implication not being thoroughly understood. Humour chuckles sarcastically at "the man in the street" or "the woman at the wash-tub." "It must be allowed," says Hamilton, in discussing the phrase, "that the way it has been sometimes applied was calculated to bring it into not unreasonable disfavour with the learned. Some . . . did not emphatically proclaim that it was no appeal to the undeveloped beliefs of the unreflective many, and they did not inculcate that it presupposed a

[1] Essays IV., p. 245.

critical analysis of these beliefs by the philosophers themselves."[1] And Seth (Pringle-Pattison), speaking in the same connection, declares, "In truth the opposition emphasised by Reid is not properly between Common-sense and Philosophy, but between the "Philosophy of Common-sense," and all previous philosophies."[2] Fraser, by his own confession, adopts the principle in the formation of his own opinions. He makes no mistake, however, in its application. "It was now [1839-40] that I began to see in our Common-sense or Common Reason a reservoir which holds for us in a latent state the rationale upon which human action and knowledge at last depend, and which it is the work of the philosopher to interpret. . . At first I was apt to confound uninterpreted with interpreted Common-sense. I was also inclined to ask for logical proof of the trustworthiness of this offered guide."[3] He soon discovered and corrected his error. "Common-sense as a term of science in metaphysics expresses those notions and beliefs ["inexplicable" Essays, p. 81] which are essential to man regarded as an intellectual and moral being."[4] "The argument from common-sense is no irrational appeal to vulgar feeling."[5] With this reservation we may add the following utterances, "After all, . . . philosophical reflection on human ignorance only proves *scientifically* what the common-sense of mankind . . . has already settled spontaneously."[6] In short, "common belief must be trusted till it is actually proved . . . to be unworthy of trust."[7] In retrospect over this period he writes, "I was now beginning to see in the 'common-sense' which the philosopher has to interpret, nothing less than the inspiration of God who gives man a share of the Universal Reason."[8]

[1] Reid's Works, etc., p. 752. [2] Scottish Philosophy, pp. 109-110.
[3] Biog. Phil., pp. 60, 61. [4] Essays II., p. 102. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[6] Essays V., p. 280. [7] Essays VI., p. 325. [8] Biog. Phil., p. 154.

From this last quotation we may observe that Fraser does not stand at the limited point of view of Reid, who popularised the expression. He has enlarged and deepened its scope in the spirit of Berkeley, Hegel, and Lotze. The vital question has ceased to rage round our mediate or immediate perception of matter, common-sense must answer the final question as to the meaning of our whole experience. Its judgments shall solve "for man" the riddle of existence. Despite acute criticism, he concludes that "Expansion rather than subversion of the philosophy which ultimately argues from the common-sense has been going on."[1] In line with Hamilton's persuasive depreciation of the power of our knowledge to pave the way for common-sense, Fraser has materially assisted in this expansion. True, the phrase is less in evidence in his later publications, but the spirit pervades the whole series as we shall observe in dealing with "philosophical faith." The difference lies wholly in the name.

The function of common-sense is to decide in all the vital questions of philosophy – an enlargement upon its original claim.

In our scientific investigation of knowledge, as well as in our ethical activity, reason lights on certain presuppositions which it must unconditionally accept. "Common-sense," as it is used and defended by Fraser. in common with the Scottish School, indicates the immediate acceptance of these presuppositions of our spiritual constitution. They are not open to dispute by our discrete reason, because they are explicitly or tacitly assumed in all reasoning about reality. In form, therefore, the position may be held to correspond to Kant's attitude towards the validity of the categories. We must apply certain notions because they condition all possibility of experience. That the results or postulates of commonsense are occasionally rough and ready is due to the uncritical latitude which such a position naturally suggests, but the attitude is undoubtedly perfectly reasonable. We see in it a

Its use is justifiable despite its ambiguity.

[1] "Reid" F.S Series, p. 144.

corrective and necessary supplement to a critical or sceptical approach to the facts of our knowledge and experience. Provided, then, that we are clear on the connotation of the term, we may use the rubric "Principles of Common-Sense." Dugald Stewart, another of the School, prefers "fundamental laws of human belief" or "primary elements of human reason," and we ourselves think that, for a phrase which requires so much defence and explanation, might well be substituted a more abstruse and technical designation.

Fraser makes no attempt, tentative or otherwise, to elaborate a system of these ultimate postulates, merely retaining this incontrovertible immediacy as the final court of appeal.

## CAN WE REALLY KNOW REALITY? PHENOMENALISM AND SUBJECTIVE IDEALISM REJECTED.

The object of our knowledge is not differentiated and systematised by the experiencing subject, but "interpreted."

A dictum of common reason distinctly asserts that we reach trustworthiness in our knowledge of external objects. Any other view ends logically in solipsism and scepticism. Descartes, when he found his doubt arrested by the necessity of his own existence in the act of doubting—*cogito ergo sum*—was, consistently, unable to reach external reality or to transcend the circle of his own ideas. Locke, by assuming that our knowledge was confined to a knowledge of the ideas of which we are conscious with their associative combinations, set the seed for the total scepticism which Hume strove in vain to establish. Nor is Kant in better plight. Starting with a given, unrelated, undifferentiated conglomerate of sensations, upon which order is thrust by the perceptional and rational constitution of the subject, he dissevers the "thing in itself" from the world of knowledge. His objective realism of necessity and universality is obtained by means of a rigorous subjective idealism. Admit the

premised postulates, and the conclusion is a matter of course. But, with the Scottish philosophers, Fraser refuses to grant that the presented object in sense-perception is so casual and unsystematised. We find an inkling of the truth even in Hume's dissolution of the self into its conscious states, in that he yet retains the discarded and disgraced phantom (in memory, continuity, etc.), in order to conduct its own disintegration; and also in the suspicious distinction in Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," between Wahrnehmungsurteil and Erfahrungsurteil. Although Kant insists that "As mere ideas (vorstellungen, or mental facts) they are subject to no law of their own," yet this chaos or manifold forces us to apply to it certain of the categories on definite occasions, which categories are not arbitrarily chosen by the subject but necessitated by the internal character of the object. In short, "the use to which Kant eventually puts the categories is simply to add the mind's stamp of necessity to connections which exist independently, but which, as so existing, are *said* to be merely contingent." [1]

We do inadequately but truly know reality, and not merely the joint product of two unknowables, the "self" and the "thing-in-itself."

As Reid's chief polemic was intended to prove, the fact is, that we are not entitled to assume that our knowledge is only of our own sensations or perceptions under the pure forms of intuition and the categories. We are acquainted, not with our experience as a *tertium quid* between an unknowable and the subject, but in and through that experience with the real meaning of things. What we assert about reality is not dictated merely by the constitution of the ego, but by that reality itself. Our necessarily incomplete ideal construction of being is posited as containing in its essential details the manner in which reality functions. The laws of science are not imposed by us on nature but by nature upon us, our formulation of them depending, of course, on our capacity of

[1] A. S. Pringle-Pattison, Scottish Philosophy, p. 139.

comprehension. Thus Fraser's realism, inherited from Reid, in opposition to what Hamilton terms "representationism," refunds into objective existence the rational construction and intricately articulated, cosmical constitution which Kant assigns to the phenomenal. In short, reason does not construct, but reconstruct, or, to use Fraser's own favourite verb, "interpret" the universe.

The validity of the argument is due perhaps as much to the final position, which Fraser reaches through analogy and the moral postulates as to the personal nature of the power manifesting itself to us in nature, as to its intrinsic quality. At the same time it is no less of a prejudice to continue to designate as "thing" that which conditions the use of our rational constitution so far as to suggest and define the particular use we shall make of it and its laws and the results we shall attain to, than to see therein the revelation of a being operating according to reason. We shall see how he develops this realism positively into theism by an advance upon the later Berkeleian position.

Our moral activities presuppose a knowledge of the existence of other persons.

The other line of argument according to which our moral relations demand a knowledge of the independent existence of an interconnected system of persons remains less definitely developed by Fraser in this special regard. And yet, our purposive activities presuppose our apprehension that such beings exist and also of the manner of their existence. Here again our categories of description and conception must depend on our own spiritual equipment but our attitude is not determined from the nature of the self but dictated to us by reality. We may, and Fraser often does designate such a knowledge as rational faith (Vernunftglaube) but it seems a contest about a name,[1] since these facts are known in the same way and with the same compelling force as

[1] Phil. Review, 1896, p. 573.

other facts of nature. Scientific knowledge holds only under causal conditions, but it is illegitimate to confine our knowledge of cause to our partial, abstract, mechanical description by means of universal laws. The necessity for individuals is at least as scientific, direct and incontrovertible as that for universals, and if we do not assume them into our system from the first we can never reach them at all.

Popular form of the argument.

In his discussion of Locke's threefold object and threefold manner of knowledge he answers the enigma in a more abrupt fashion. "All physical science is contained in a undemonstrable faith. . . . . One may say that he has a natural assurance of his own existence, as a separate self-conscious ego; and also of the existence of things outside, things that are actually seen and touched, or otherwise present to the senses. He finds when he acts that he cannot rid himself of either of these working convictions, and he finds, too, that each of them is the correlative of the other."[1] The presuppositions of action are at once an actor and an arena of external reality.

Introduction of "belief" or "faith,"

That he should correct and supplement Hume's sceptical resolution of experience into units of "impressions and ideas" with their associatedness according to certain contingent laws is natural and need not be further elaborated. His point of view involves, as we see, an interesting deviation from that of Kant and that of Hamilton. He dispenses with the former's spectre of noumena, and the latter's implied phenomenalism, exaggerated by Mansel and adopted by Spencer, is arrested and supplemented by irresistible faith. As illustration may be quoted the conclusion of his criticism of Hamilton's account of our causal judgment. "Causality thus appears in our actual mental experience, not as an inevitable *manner of conceiving*, but as an inevitable expression of *a human belief* regarding real things."[2] In other

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. I., p. 54 [2] Essays IV., p. 185.

words, the universalities and necessities which govern our intellectual apprehension are also laws of external reality, confirmed by an inexplicable, yet inconvertible "conviction" that to the subjective recognition "there must be objective conditions."

necessitated by his theory of our knowledge of external existence.

While Kant banished belief from the sphere of nature by confining the latter term to mean the finite subject's construction of reality, Fraser's external reference of our experience introduces it to describe the relation of the subject to that reality which it but interprets. An irresistible belief that being will always occasion our understanding to function in a particular way, with the complimentary moral belief that reason will not finally be baulked, is certainly different from Kant's critical result that so long as understanding functions it must function according to the categories. It may always be doubted, however, if the latter, undoubtedly scientifically justified, restriction of "knowledge" more deserves the name than, or is as true to, the real nature of experience as the former common-sense position.

Our knowledge, however, does not completely condition reality.

Fraser's middle term, then, is 'known reality' which leaves the ultimate at worst only incompletely known, our positive acquaintance with its essence being bounded only by our rational constitution. Common-sense prevents him from carrying the objectivation analogically to illegitimate lengths. There may be other knowledge of existence more perfect than ours. "Even apart from the mysteries of Faith, we have no right to take for granted that *our* knowledge is the measure of absolute knowledge."[1] He recognises the finitude of our knowledge without admitting its inherent total disabilities. "Till the seeming contradictions, whose ramifications traverse finite knowledge, are reconciled with a definition of absolute existence, we must continue to regard what is known by us as incapable of limiting what absolutely is."[2]

[1] Essays VI., p. 319. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

## THE CHARACTER OF, AND NECESSITY FOR, "PHILOSOPHIC FAITH."

So far we have not touched on the relation of knowledge and faith beyond the statement that common reason (or "philosophical faith" Essays, p. 100) compels our admission of postulates not deducible by reasoning or demonstration. As the core and main foundation of our author's system, however, we must consider it in detail and with his own arguments.

Philosophy must in the end be a *via media* between Nescience and Omniscience. History vouches for it,

"The Catholic Philosophy [or Insoluble Realism]" he says in 1846, "intermediate between (constructive=) dogmatism, whether idealistic or naturalistic, and (destructive=) scepticism, accepts ultimate human beliefs in their incomprehensible integrity, and confesses the necessary exhaustion of Speculative Reason in the presence of Reality."[1] The second part of this sentence expresses in humbler and less pretentious terms the result emphasised by Kant but the first contains the supplementary doctrine which we have now to discuss. Fraser, on critical consideration, finds that the whole course of philosophy in history indicates a seeming conflict between the two extremes of Omniscience and Universal Nescience, but a virtual co-operation of both to the sober intermediateness of a Realism chained to Insolubles, which position he himself strenuously advocates. This interpretation he retains until his latest work. Systems, like the philosophical thinking of man, show times of certainty and times of doubt, now soaring in sublimities, now crawling in mundane and every-day affairs.[2] But in the end philosophic scepticism and gnostic omniscience equilibrize in the *via media* of Bacon, of Pascal, and of Locke, a sure foundation of truth in the shifting sand of imperfect comprehension. Not only does this constitute the verdict of history but it must be capable of rational vindication.

[1] Rational Philosophy, pp. 36-37, *vide* "Reid" F.S. Series, p. 156 in 1898. [2] See mind, 1890, "Philosophical development."

and reason, in the presence of incomprehensibles, must admit it.

Every element of our knowledge finds itself on analysis incompletely explicable, each ultimately ends in the incomprehensible. We must be "content with an incompletable fragment at the last."[1] "Space, time, and causality paralyse finite intelligence."[2] Space and time hang between the intellectual necessity for a completed whole and an inconceivable infinity and eternity, with no means of reconciliation, while cause ends in the dilemma of the infinite regress of a continuous series of events, or of an initial self-dependent, originative cause. Confront our reason with any of the facts of our experience and it must confess its inadequacy for the task of a thorough-going explanation. There are two wrong ways of treating these limitations. Their existence may either be tacitly ignored as in materialism and rationalism, or they may be extended till they cover all our knowledge as in universal nescience.

Materialism and Rationalism fail to support their claims

It is sufficient in the first case to show that real existence is truncated in either instance. Materialism fails to embrace consciousness and morality, and rationalism leaves unexplained the infinite manifold of sensations. No philosphy, which proceeds to exhibit in a complete, reasoned system, *totum, teres atque rotundum*, the relations and implicates of knowledge is above a fatal suspicion. Neither sensations nor understanding, nor, for that matter, any possible conjunction of them can more than partially account for the content of experience. At the end there is always a ragged edge, where the road descends into an impassable abyss; finally, as Bacon puts it, all things must be "left abrupt."

and Nescience or Total Scepticism means complete intellectual suicide.

But there exist no less fatal objections against a complete denial of the unworthiness of reason. A thorough-going agnosticism assumes to itself an infinite outlook in denying that anything can be known. The

[1] Phil. Review, 1896, p. 571, "Philosophical Faith." [2] Hibbert Journal, 1907, p. 242, "Our Final Venture."

question is begged at the outset and any attempt to carry the idea to its logical issues is pulled up sharp. Indeed a consistent Pyrrhonism, or "total inability to assert anything about anything" is unthinkable and results in an annihilation supposedly unconditional but really fictitious and untenable. But even a theological scepticism is untenable. Kant, after he had demonstrated the inability of pure reason to transcend experience, found in practical or moral reason the necessity for reinstating as presuppositions of morality the metaphysical dogmas to which he had just shown the door. Hume, even, recognised that, "in all human reasonings from experience, . . . a step is taken in a faith 'which is not supported by any argument or process of the understanding,' and yet it is sanctioned as a step that is reasonable."[1] This demand by custom for a practical trustworthiness of the universe presupposes "an established harmony between our thoughts and the course of nature; so that all natural evidence is fundamentally cosmic faith."[2] If we held logically to a Universal Nescience we would be driven to suicide to prevent the operation of our intellectual faculties.

"Unknown" and "Unknowable" are not convertible terms. We do know although the foundation of our knowledge is unprovable postulates.

"The intermediate," as he frequently tells us, "is stamped upon all our faculties and all our experience. We are alike unable to know all or to remain ignorant of all."[3] "To show that a *human* knowledge of the universe *must* at last become incomplete or mysterious, presupposes that something is knowable by man, although divine omniscience may not be within his reach."[4] The same position is thus directly stated by his successor, "Our knowledge of the Universe we must hold to be true and valid. So far as it goes it expresses the actual nature of the fact, and there is nothing in the fact that is essentially unknowable. But, on the other hand, there is a great deal which

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. I., p. 209. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 213.
[3] Philosophical Theism, Vol. II., p. 211. [4] Phil. Review, 1896, p. 565, "Philosophical Faith."

is *unknown*, and which, we may predict, will always remain unknown to the finite intelligence."[1] Intermediate thus between perfect comprehension of inexhaustible "nature" and complete ignorance, the human mind seeks repose outside "knowledge." In order to rely upon our knowledge we must accept certain ultimate postulates without proof, entirely on the dictation of philosophical faith or a reasonable common-sense.

Faith is the final word in a philosophy which recognises the intermediate character of human nature.

"Faith has two meanings—a metaphysical and a theological. In the former of these sciences it signifies the belief of principles, which, in themselves are incognizable or irreconcilable by the understanding and yet unquestionable."[2] It must be distinguished as "reason" from reasoning, in that it "finally authenticates conclusions,"—this in the spirit of Reid, who calls it "the first degree of reason." Faith or moral trust "seems to be the highest form that reason takes in man."[3] Scepticism and intellectualism both destroy this final faith. "Faith is, on the one hand, lost in the dark abyss of doubt; on the other it evaporates in the sunny haze of the empyrean of transcendentalism."[4] This unconditional reliance forms the "theory of knowledge," which, he said in 1856, he was "endeavouring more fully to mature,"[5] which he elaborates in his Gifford lectures, and about which he concludes in a persuasive and eloquent chapter at the end of his hand-book on Berkeley. "May it not be said of Agnosticism and Gnosticism that each is right is much that it affirms, but wrong is something that it denies, and that mutual explanations might induce approximation to the Philosophy of Faith."[6] "This Philosophy does not offer an intellectual system of the actual universe . . . it offers faiths, verified by much reflection, as the philosophical basis and constitution of all philosophical

[1] A. Seth (Pringle-Pattison), Scottish Philosophy, p. 202.
[2] Essays I., p. 32, note. [3] Phil. of Theism, Vol. I., p. 28.
[4] Essays, p. 34. [5] Essays, p. IV. [6] Berkeley, B.P.C., p. 232.

knowledge."[1] This faith, inherited from Locke and Berkeley, from Reid and Hamilton, is thus unavoidable. "Every principle must be either resolvable by the understanding or rest on faith; and as every conceivable question may be thus carried down to faith, all knowledge runs into mystery."[2] In more modern phraseology, the ultimate basis of our knowledge is constituted by a web of unprovable postulates.

Yet faith remains in its final analysis trustworthy, and offers a reasonable escape out of the dilemmas of understanding. "To assert that man must believe both of two contradictory propositions, is either to encourage absolute scepticism or to encourage our spontaneous faith in one or other of the counter propositions. . . . But to offer an independent proof that, while apparently contradictory, they are really incomprehensible, opens a way for the mysterious retention of both, without offence to logic. It converts into a fact above reason what had seemed to subvert its fundamental law."[3] Kant adopts this *reductio ad absurdum* "proof" not merely to show the incomprehensibility of the sections of experience in the intellectual and moral spheres, but to indicate their mutual dissimilarity and incompatibility. He rather desired to preserve for each its integrity, with the result of two apparently irreconcilably hostile realities over against one another. He leaves them uncomparable wholes, which the intellectual attempts of the third critique fails satisfactorily to unify. Fraser, in his "Spiritual Realism" or transformed Berkeleianism, supplements this by the "common-sense" observation, that these are, after all, but two abstractly sundered components of our one experience. Where our reasoning faculties falter and yield, faith steps in to heal the breach, as it must if experience is to be preserved in its entirety.

It enables us to accept a unification of apparently incompatible but actually incomprehensible facts of experience *e.g.*, scientific equivalent metamorphoses and originative moral will.

Within this faith itself a distinction of higher and

The two kinds of faith.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 230. [2] Essays I., p. 35. [3] Essays V., p. 274.

lower, of wider and more partial, can be drawn. There is the cosmical faith of the scientific man and the theistic faith of the true philosopher. The trustworthiness of the latter is powerfully represented against the former by an important line of argument greatly favoured by Fraser. We may call it the *tu-quoque* argument to cosmic or scientific faith, or "the *argumentum ad hominem* to the scientific man," which, in the words of Professor J. Seth, "has been strikingly and persuasively stated by Professor Fraser." It merits careful attention. We seem to distinguish two varieties of the argument not always clearly distinguished in actual statement.

The *argumentum ad hominem* to the scientific man asserts in its first form the co-ordinative validity of theistic or moral faith and cosmical faith.

That which appears to us to be the primary and more legitimate form runs as follows. Science, as we have seen, must ultimately rest on propositions, whose only justification is their indispensability in making scientific knowledge possible. The uniformity of nature, its interpretability and previsibility, its molecular construction, etc., all demand faith for their acceptance. They form hypothetical conclusions which are neither deducible nor further reducible. The simplest generalities arouse our scientific faith. This faith is not always recognised as such. The fact that these fundamental propositions, on which our everyday imperfectible deductions are unconsciously based, are merely presuppositions of scientific knowledge is easily forgotten. Hypotheses become assertorial propositions. Faith, nevertheless, is implied in the accepted trustworthiness of these statements, faith that our knowledge represents truth. Moral experience claims, now, the same right in regard to its trustworthiness and its presuppositions. Here are two characteristic utterances. "Theistic faith is as much at the bottom of our moral experience of the infinite reality as physical faith in the order of nature is at the bottom of our physically scientific experience."[1] "The

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. I., pp. 161-162.

scientific agnostic is ready to take the inductive leap in the dark through faith in a natural order believed to be immanent in his sense surroundings; this leap is essentially an act of faith and not the result of a purely logical process of reasoning, emptied of all trust. Is he not also required, under pressure of moral or spiritual necessity . . . to regard as also reasonable that still deeper interpretation of the universe which makes it at last the supernatural manifestation of supreme moral purpose? . . . For every step in the physical interpretation of the external world equally involves the substitution of *trust* for a perfect, rational insight of the infinite contingencies of nature. . . The agnosticism which retains physical science is not really a protest against physical faith; it is only an arrest of faith at the point at which faith advances from a purely physical to the moral and religious interpretation of life and the universe."[1] The real faith, however, and this remains unexplicated by Fraser, consists not merely in the acceptance of the validity of the argument from experience to reality, which both—science and morality—make, but primarily in the assumption that each is truthful—or as truthful as the other—and that, therefore, its postulates conform to the conditions of the real. This branch of the *ad hominem* argument consists, then, in showing that neither has the advantage in an essentially similar practice. Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

The weakness of this ratiocination is that it co-ordinates physical and moral faith. The postulates of morality are valid only so far as the scientific faith in its own interpretation of the universe and no further. In a phenomenalism or in a purely "critical" philosophy its power is shattered from the outset. No doubt, the presuppositions of uniformity and of physical causation are necessary conditions of human intellection and scientific knowledge. Similarly, moral

This co-ordination leaves room for a scientific disclaimer and fails in a phenomenalist or "critical philosophy."

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 218, 219.

responsibility, conscience, and remorse postulate a supreme righteous providence at the heart of things. But if your scientist is a philosopher he will not presume that his point of view exhibits unreservedly the truth of existence. Pure reason or intelligence do not, on this admission, condition the "Absolute," the "thing in itself," the "Unknowable," the "Unconditioned." Nor may moral experience project its postulates into final reality. Morality must exist as subjectively as knowledge. The *tu-quoque* cuts both ways.

The argument may be turned against the pretentions of moral and religious faith.

If then, at this stage, as often happens, moral faith transmutes and virtually annihilates the scientific presuppositions of space, time and equivalent causality as ultimate facts it commits suicide. It saws off the branch on which itself is seated, destroys the channel of its own force. Then comes the turn of the scientific man to use the argument. "You claim for your postulates as much validity as I for mine. You expose the final worthlessness of mine, and are logically bound, therefore, to reject your own and adopt Agnosticism." Fraser does, indeed, admit the abstract possibility that, absolutely, moral experience may not be confirmed.

But, in conjunction with the faith that our knowledge is of the real, it strengthens the case for theism.

The truth is, this argument forms but a side-issue in the reasoning, a flying column ordered out to prevent irritating flank attacks. It gathers strength, however, if conjoined with the objective nature of knowledge already discussed. If scientific investigation illuminates reality, absolute existence must also, on a similar basis, yield her secrets to the intuitions of the moral personality.

Moral faith, however, has no need of the *tu quoque* argument in ts first form.

Further, the moral synthesis can, and ought to stand in its own strength. Faith in, or conviction of, human freedom or responsibility is unique and inexhaustible. To doubt this saps the life-blood of our action, and reduces us to a "thing," a conscious automaton. Reason cannot thus exterminate itself and on its own indestructible self-confidence it rears

the theistic construction of the universe. This truth we regret to find sometimes overshadowed in our author by the weaker variety of argumentation already mentioned.

The second form of the argument. Cosmic faith presupposes moral faith in the trustworthy character of existence.

A development of the *ad hominem* argument, which to a large extent forbids the above objections, is even more prominent. In form it is a modification of an abstractly possible cause for mistrust popularised by Descartes, namely, the last hindrance cast off by him on his way to universal doubt before he is pulled up short by the indubitable character of his own doubt. The faith of the scientist presupposes a moral universe every whit as much as the confidence of moral faith. "The Supreme Power might be fraudulent; in which case all that is presented in experience—my whole self-conscious life—may be found illusory; the so-called faculties of knowledge may be formed to mislead, or their issues may be meaningless."[1] Even Berkeley's conclusion is insufficient, "Perfect *goodness* of the Universal Spirit is not necessarily the consequence of the mere Spirituality of the Real. The Spirit may be diabolic or indifferent."[2] In an insane universe or moral chaos, the highest certitude must be contingent. The scientist possesses no ground for confidence in his results, unless at the same time he assumes a supreme moral power manifesting itself in phenomena. Instead of co-ordination as in the former instance, physical assurance here assumes a subordinate position.

Considerations which support the claim of moral faith for supremacy.

The considerations which produce this conclusion will be described later, but we may remark here against possible objections. 1. Moral faith is more comprehensive and so, in a larger degree, truer than the partial physical faith. Knowledge is not transcended but embraced in the wider personal experience. 2. "If it is not unreasonable to *assume* natural law as a

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. II., p. 172, *vide* "Berkeley" B.P.C., pp. 167-9, 224. "Locke" B.P.C., p. 156; Mind, 1890, p. 2. Hibbert Journal, 1907, p. 250. Biog. Phil., p. 92.

[2] Berkeley and Spiritual Realism, p. 71.

constructive principle in the interpretation of sensuous experience, why is it unreasonable to assume design, if the facts may be read in harmony with this other and deeper assumption."[1] Teleology and theism do not contradict the mechanico-dynamical judgment of events, they interpret it from a more complete viewpoint. 3. In consciousness of moral action, the supernatural comes into contact with the natural; originative, really active power with secondary causes.

Since we have discovered that our moral presuppositions are stablished faster in the groundwork of reality than our knowledge is in its superficies we may proceed to interpret in our new-born confidence the mysteries that crowd upon us.

This does not offer "proof" of the existence of the divine moral being but merely affirms that faith in our moral experience *presupposes* that it is grounded in the nature of the real.

We may legitimately object that no proof of the finally trustworthy character of a universal ruler may be built upon this foundation. Fraser unhesitatingly acknowledges the objection and verbal impossibility. Absolutely, moral experience might not be ratified. But the argument makes no pretensions at all to "prove" the existence of God—no argument, Fraser declares, agreeing with Kant, can do so. It merely, and its form declares its mission, removes a prejudice against theistic faith, common enough in certain circles. He follows Reid in this. "It is a good *argumentum ad hominem*," Reid allows, "if it can be shown that a first principle which a man rejects, stands upon the same footing with others which he admits."[2] Having accomplished this clearance, we may proceed to emphasise the dictum of common-sense. "The confidence or the faith of reason in itself is indestructible and inexhaustible; and faith in itself means faith also in the ultimate rationality of the universe."[3] The diabolic character of the Supreme Power would be impermissible, even if true. In his own words, "To attribute what amounts to dishonesty, deceit, injustice,

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. I., p. 223. [2] Reid's Works, p. 439.
[3] Seth. Scottish Philosophy, p. 71.

want of goodness, to the power supremely at work in the universe, is virtually to forbid all intellectual and practical intercourse with its manifestation presented in experience."[1] Deeper than Berkeley's empirical analogies, deeper than Descartes *lumen naturale,* deeper than Kant's felt need for reconciling the categorical imperative and final happiness, goes this principle of unwavering faith. It states at once our impotence and our high degree. We cannot comprehend all things, but our personal existence and experience demand the trustworthiness of their presuppositions.

Thus Faith, born of ignorance and nursed on incomprehensibles rears its head in the end on the solid foundation of the integral fact—so often split into irrational surds—of human nature, and enfolds in its grasp the whole of the eternal universe: while Reason, boastfully synonymising itself with knowledge, finds itself but an indispensable cicerone to the base of the mountains of Faith's domain.

## COMPLETE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THE ONLY CLUE FOR INTERPRETING REALITY.

Philosophy must explain complex human nature in its entirety.

Faith, physical, moral and spiritual, is the complementary attitude to, or inevitable corollary of, Fraser's key to reality but it supplies no positive clue to its own content. That criterion is our whole personality. Did we merely know, we might spin out the concatenation of existence from the necessary truths of reason, were we confined to sensations and emotions, we would be content to feel, if volitions alone expressed our being, we might live and act and ask no questions. But the mystery of complex humanity is the actual harmonisation of all these elements. They exist together, if somewhat unruly at times, and with this fact of real existence and the faith that they were meant so to exist, commonsense

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., p. 272.

not only criticises all theories of being, but sallies forth to single combat with the ultimates. What does not satisfy man as man is for man an incomplete and unwarranted conclusion. "It is the office of philosophy," says Professor Seth,[1] "to investigate with impartial scrutiny the credentials of science, of morality and religion alike, to examine the foundations of belief, scientific as well as moral and religious, and, while condemning any encroachment of one upon the field of another, to reduce, if possible, all these attitudes to a single attitude, the attitude of the complete man to the total reality." If only for the clearness and earnestness with which Fraser advocates this conception, his work has a permanent value.

Knowledge and moral will are not discordant in finite personality and therefore physical nature and moral power are not irreconcilable in the divine.

Man, he says in effect, is the highest standard to himself of the nature of the real, without prejudging the question of its transcendent qualities. In the first place, rational consciousness, as present in human experience, even though evolved, must be employed as a premiss in any inference as to the constitution of the absolute. "Scientific intercourse with the natural universe is virtually intelligence in intercourse with intelligence—the mind of man learning to think the thought or reason that is latent in things."[2] Especially, however, does his moral agency seek repose in the ultimacy of its own postulates. Responsibility, conscience, and remorse affirm a self-determination, not only absent from but more valuable than mathematico-dynamical "natural" causation, while it admits the necessary adequacy of the scientific assumption on a purely intellectual basis. The personally responsible independence and transcendence of the infinite being, assured of by moral faith, is as valid a conclusion as the universality and unchangeableness of causal law in nature is of a

[1] New World, 1900, p. 404, Recent Gifford Lectures.

[2] Philosophy of Theism, vol. i., p. 254.

cosmic faith in uniformity. Deny either and one half of our conscious life is discounted as illusory. Man with his many-sided mentality exists practically as a harmonious unit. When we disjoin the elements of his consciousness in abstract thinking to form a rounded system of the implicates and affirmations of each, we find a difficulty in reuniting our units. But the fault lies with us, not with reality. "What God has joined together let no man put asunder." We cannot, even in our scientific arrogance, separate the "life" from the bodily organism and put them together at our will; yet they existed as one organic whole and truth was in their combination. Moral freedom and physical causation are both presupposed in our activity. Without either we could not exist as personalities, therefore they must not be ultimately irreconcilable. That cannot be discordant in the divine which is not inconsistent in the human.

Righteous will must, in fact, be presupposed as the originating cause in all change. Our personality cannot be transmuted in the divine, although it may be transcended.

Indeed we can go further. We observe that the only ultimate or originating power that enters into human experience seems to be moral or spiritual, so that this is the only sort of ultimate explanation of the universe's causation that man can comprehend. Man must regard the universe from the point of his own appearance in it. On the other hand, ability to satisfy the claims of the whole man, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, forms the test of any theory which presumes to formulate the world of existence. "This final appeal to human nature must, in short, be to human nature *as it is in fact*, not to human nature *distorted in hypothesis*." "Man at his highest, acting freely under moral obligation, with its implied intellectual and moral postulates, is suggested as a more fitting key to the ultimate interpretation of things than man [intellectual and organic] abstracted from the moral experience that is often unconscious in the human individual but is realised fully in the

[1] Reid F.S. Series, p. 70.

Ideal man, and can be disclaimed by imperfect men only by disclaiming human responsibility."[1] With this key we must unlock the gates of being though we penetrate but the outer courts. Only omniscience can know the unfathomable nature of God, can have "the intellectual vision of all as the omnipresent Eternal;" but complete personality requires a perfect moral being to explain itself. Beyond the manifestations of ultimate reality, or God, in him and to him man cannot go, but go so far he must. "I know in part," says the apostle, but "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out."

The *homo mensura* standard is ultimate for us.

The *homo mensura* standard is of course hoary with antiquity. Yet it has never seriously been questioned since Protagoras employed it sceptically. Fraser's merit lies in his insistence upon the *homo* in its integrity, combined with his acknowledgment that it remains only partially adequate. Individual personality enables us to transcend and harmonise the abstract contradictories which reason affirms, universal and particular, change and permanence, finitude and infinity, abstract necessity and freedom, good and evil. Opposites are reconciled in the unique fact of the universe, but no ambitious claim is preferred on this account to perfect knowledge, nor is being deemed determinable without remainder by the finite model of humanity.

We have now to consider whither our clue guides us, to where the river of life vanishes into the illimitable, to where the unscalable peaks of the habitation of the eternal reach out into the mist.

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. I., pp. 270-271.

## THE THREE-FOLD ARTICULATION OF REALITY.

Common belief postulates the three existences: ego, matter, and God.

An educated commonsense articulates reality into a three-fold existence—the ego, matter, and God. "Each of these existences men seem to be mentally obliged to recognise, with innumerable differences in their individual conceptions of each, and also of the mutual relations of the three."[1] Fraser does not raise the psychological question as to the beginning or possibly evolved character of this triplicity in the objects of consciousness, but accepts it primarily on an inductive generalisation of philosophic systems and steadfast meditation on the reason of mankind. There seems no escape, if we ask the consciousness of a thoughtful man as to its contents, from the acceptance of these three realities, the self, the external world, and a divine or supernatnal presupposed in the imperfections of experience. Locke, the philosopher who most unhesitatingly expresses the convictions of the common mind, speaks of "man's three-fold knowledge of existence." "We have the ideas of but three sorts of substances—namely, God, finite intelligence, and bodies." Fraser tells us, too, of "the great objects of knowledge—God, self, and the world," which, with their mutual relations, "have attracted a succession of minds of different schools."[2] "There are three central ultimate problems of primary human interest,"[3] about which "philosophy is the supreme speculation, concerned with matter or outward nature, self or spirit, and God or the final all-determining Power."[4]

These are not rationally deducible, but are invariably discovered in human experience philosophically considered.

The nature of the case precludes any intellectual deduction of the necessity of there being three and only three departments of being. Parseeism, indeed, confronts us apparently with a belief in four, while philosophers have time and again inculcated a reduction

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. I., p. 39.

[2] Essays II., p. 118. [3] Mind, 1890, Philosophical Development, p. 1. [4] Reid, F.S. Series, p. 142, *vide* also pp. 138-9.

to two or one. The justification of common-sense, however, lies ready to hand. The existence of self-consciousness is hardly open to doubt: Descartes founds his philosophy on this certitude. It cannot fully explain the succession and material of its states from its own rational and sensible constitution, and inevitably presupposes an external world. This dual quality of existence is rationally felt to be incomplete without an infinite being or supreme moral power transcending the individual ego and the solid or extended world of flux.

In this Fraser follows Locke, and gains a convenient introduction to his own opinions.

In inaugurating the discussion of the final realities with an uncritical affirmation of the ultimate factors, Fraser appears to be unique in the followers of Locke. He accepts it primarily for convenience sake. He thereby gains a simplification of the task and avoids a lengthened inquisition into the constituents of our human knowledge. He is enabled, too, to cursorily summarise the more ambitious positive philosophic theories into materialistic, panegoistic or subjective idealism, and pantheistic, with scepticism, which denies knowledge altogether and refuses to make any statements as to reality. Still, this is artificially simple. We fail to find anywhere even a consistent speculative solipsist. For an introduction and preparation of his own results, however, a superficial survey of these hypotheses serves him excellently. In general, we may agree that it is better to start with a critical appreciation of the three objects of consciousness rather than with an abstraction of one, from which exclusive preference we may suffer until the end.

The interrogation of their mutual relations suggests the question: "Must the persistent personality of which I and other men are conscious in the brief interval between life and death; the world of perceptible things which surrounds and assimilates us all; and the invisible Power revealed in and through persons and things,—must these three be finally or

philosophically distinguished from one another, in a threefold articulation of the realities?"[1]

With our rational criterion, the *homo indivisus et perfectus*, we pass in array, approve or reject each theory as it arises.

## THE CONSTITUTION AND FUNCTIONS OF MATTER.

Materialism fails to explain the major part of our experience.

The impulse towards unity finds vent among scientific minds in an inclusive materialism. In modern times the mechanical theory of Democritus and the atomists has been resuscitated with a renewal of vigour from the enormous advances in mathematico-astronomical, chemical and biological investigations and results, especially by the attractive generalization of the evolutionary hypothesis. Exclusive concentration on this department of knowledge is at once lop-sided and suicidal. It resolves the instrument of consciousness into a mechanical spectator, a chemical by-product or epiphenomenon of the material processes. The huge machine constructed by reason has rent its creator; the reality, the true activity of consciousness, has been frightened into a practical non-existence by a phantom of its own distorted creation. It requires a trick of the imagination and the devious paths of long argumentation to preserve any plausibility to the materialistic hypothesis. Neither the laws of reason nor of faith can be deduced from the laws which govern matter, and our moral consciousness is outraged by its own *a priori* annihilation. The truncated, eviscerated unity of pan-materialism suggests the methods of Procrustes, and the remanent whole neither explains itself nor the universe.

Matter remains, however, a medium of communication and a factor in man's educa-

An external, material universe exercises, nevertheless, important and indispensable functions. Following Berkeley, it is the medium of intercourse not merely between finite minds or persons but also, and similarly, between the divine, regulative intelligence and the

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., p. 268.

tion, intellectual and moral. It is probably uncreated and is the means of God's eternal manifestation of himself to finite persons.

universe of persons. By its incompletely controllable action, moreover, on our senses and feelings, by its inseparable connection with our pleasures and pains, our desires and aversions, it assists in man's moral probation. It assumes in Fraser's theistic universe a more substantial place than is usual. Creation, the generally accepted corollary of theism, if not expressly denied, finds him predisposed against it. Although in early years he inclines to the Kantian non-objectivity of space and time and their dependence on the faculties of finite beings he revises this view later, especially with regard to time. It receives an objectively real existence as the universal mode in which God manifests himself to us. In this spirit he proceeds to ask: "Why must there be any beginning of all creative or providential activity? May not Divine Providence shown in an eternally evolving universe be a more worthy conception, although at last (for us), a mysterious one, than providential activity confined within a limited period of time."[1] The eternity of the cosmos is presupposed in its capacity of manifesting the eternal God.[2] No philosophic proof exists for the assumption that God created matter out of nothing, and, indeed, without the power of scientific certitude, the presumption is all the other way. "I know not why the evolution of the universe must be supposed to have had a beginning, or that there ever was a time in which God was unmanifested to finite persons."[3] With Sir W. Hamilton he believes that the infinite regress remains just as thinkable (or unthinkable) as a first beginning. Sir W. Hamilton's unknowable Infinite and Absolute, or, in Kant's words, the causal antinomy, transcends understanding and reason. It remains a matter for the philosophic faith. In the same way, too, the infinity or boundlessness of the

[1] Hibbert Journal 1907, p. 255, Our Final Venture. [2] *Vide.* Philosophy of Theism, vol. I., p. 233. [3] Berkeley's Works, 2nd Edition, p. 66.

universe has a preponderance of rationality against its physical limitedness.

The teleological and cosmical proofs are fallacious.

On the other hand there is no legitimate inference from the world to God. The conclusion infinitely transcends the premises. The cosmological and teleological "proofs" are both unsatisfactory. They both presuppose what they pretend to deduce. From a theistic point of view they are useful in producing a disposition to an idealistic conception of the world and in strengthening faith when a theism has been otherwise reached. "What are misleadingly called 'demonstrative and logical arguments' that God exists are really more or less successful analyses of the rational constituents of a faith already in germ."[1] Theistic proof as the condition of all proof is itself incapable of scientific proof. "Did you deduce *your own being*?" asks Coleridge; "Even this is less absurd than the conceit of deducing the divine Being."[2] The teleological argument utilised by his philosophic godfathers, Reid and Berkeley, is scrupulously rejected by Fraser. In truth, the observations on which we base our arguments *presuppose* in us a faith in a supreme universal ruler before they can even be accepted as scientifically accurate. This faith is valid but not deduced.

## MAN'S PLACE IN THE COSMOS.

The plausibility of Immaterialism.

The physical laws and phenomena being thus unable to explain themselves or to provide material for an intellectually satisfying inference to the supreme power, recourse must be had to our accepted standard. Truth to tell, we have extracted but a compartment of our experience, that dealing with the material world, and cannot be disappointed at its failure to envelop the whole. Shall we succeed better, if we emphasise the other side of the relation, the knower instead of

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., p. 39. [2] *Vide idem*, p. 37.

the known? *A priori*, certainly not, but there exists a quaint, empirical plausibility in favour of panegoism or immaterialism. The world we know depends for its existence, *qua* known, on the forms of our mental constitution, its *esse* is essentially *percipi*. Logically pursued this doctrine issues in solipsism and Fraser criticises it as such. "At the most," he presses, outside known existence, "only an unqualified and unquantified *something* remains, of which nothing can be either affirmed or denied—an empty abstraction or negation." [1] Nothing now seems great in the universe of existence but self-conscious mind: and the only living mind of which I am conscious is my own." [2] "Universal Immaterialism," he concludes, "has more to say for itself than Universal Materialism." [3]

In the irreducible element of sense-perception we confront a universe of things and persons external to and partially independent of our conscious ego.

We are brought up sharp, however, by an incalculable element in our own experience. The fact of sense-perception precludes the reduction of all to the synthesis of my individual consciousness. Kant admits this as well. But he only fringes the subject, for in his epistemological ignorance of the thing-in-itself in his equation of the content of sense with a blur or Gewühl, instead of securing non-interference for his moral criterion, he destroys all foundation for outward reference of any part of his experience. There are no observed manifestations either of the presence of the divine personality or of other conscious selves in Kant's subjective idealism. In such a case human reason revolts.[4] Unless through our *knowledge* we become acquainted with rational order external to us, with manifestations of conscious action, we cannot postulate beings apart from us with whom we come into moral contact, and to whom we owe allegiance or responsibility. We are eternally confined within the sphere of our own experience, with an unknowable

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. I., p. 124. [2] *Ibid.* p. 126. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[4] *Vide* "Reid," F.S. Series, p. 138.

beyond, to penetrate which even faith, the indomitable, lacks a starting point.

Against this more subtle development of the early Berkleian position Fraser guards himself in the manner of Reid. To escape a despairing nescience we must accept the undoubted objective reference of knowledge. But he finds, also, in sensations a further rational basis. With their unquestionably non-internal and non-subjective causation he wins back the whole intellectual content of experience for external existence. The occasion of whatever is known so exists, apart from our knowing it, that it must be known in that and in no other way. The categories and laws of nature are no longer conditions imposed more or less arbitrarily by the subject on the affectations of our ego by the thing in itself, they are the revealed manifestation of reality understood and interpreted by a like being to that which so reveals itself.

These exist under rationally discoverable laws, which are expressions of the divine mind. Theism or Spiritual Realism.

This prepares us in part for the new aspect of matter. This different standpoint of the immanence of the divine reinterprets all the discoveries in the realms of physical science and necessity as the articulate expression of the laws according to which the infinite power expresses itself through matter to men. Fraser combines as we see, a realist appreciation of the objectivity of our knowledge with the theistic supplement of its inherent divinity. In his latest publication[1] he names his own position "Spiritual Realism" as expressing this conjunction. The very fact that we *discover* laws and sequences, and do not invent them, in a material world which is not our own creation, requires an eternal mind exhibiting itself in the phenomena.

That this abuts on a pantheistic theory might so far be maintained. We have as yet no ground for assigning as characteristics to this reality intellectual and moral qualities. The pantheistic conclusion of the

God not completely manifested in the material universe.

[1] "Berkeley and Spiritual Realism," Nov. 1908.

non-residual resolution of God into His manifestations is avoided, however, by a consideration of the place of self in the universe. No attempt succeeds in reducing the self to a term or series of terms in the physical concatenation of a succession of events. Matter still retains special importance as the means of communication between persons but does not completely devour them. Man builds houses, constructs machines and complicated electrical apparatus, moves his body, originates infinitely varied sound waves. Yet he cannot be wholly absorbed by his activities, in all of which he makes use of the laws of nature subordinating himself so far. This elears the ground for the supposition that God may be actually manifested and known in and through the world, and, at the same time infinitely transcend these manifestations.

He must at least be moral and personal.

Positive evidence is afforded by a deeper experience, namely, the true nature of causality as represented in the universe. In the infinite regress of finite physical causes, we are thrown back again on our own personality. Our indubitable feelings of remorse and moral responsibility indicate that by our willing something has come into existence which ought not to be. This rational inconsistency with our nature and our knowledge, proves that it is not externally, *i.e.*, physically necessitated. We possess admitted freedom of action, too, because to doubt it stultifies that part of our experience which is truly personal and real, and which reason designates as the highest in our nature. Since, then, the only originating power we know of is personal and moral, we cannot ascribe less than a moral personality to the power with which we come into contact and which we do not cause. Morality and personality become presuppositions of all causality. The cosmic character of the universe requires universal mind at its heart.

The position of Fraser with regard to that of Locke,

Fraser was influenced by Scottish and English thought rather than Continental in forming this conclusion. In its exaggerated theological form o

Calvinistic Augustinianism it was popularised among the people. The question of free will was always discussed with zest. Transformed by the philosophers it became an almost pantheistic necessity or a libertarian indifference. Turnbull, Reid's teacher, taught that mind in the form of will is the only known active power, and his pupil, with his steady common-sense, refers power to spirit alone. "Efficient causes are not within the sphere of natural philosophy, which is concerned only with the laws or methods according to which Power operates." He seems to inculcate an unmotived causation. Locke, on the other hand, finds in the relations of the free, finite personality and the omnipotent God an undemonstrable mystery to be accepted in blind faith. Berkeley advances further to a, finally undeveloped, view of all causation, including our own, being manifestations of the supreme spirit. Fraser, as in his whole philosophy, adopts a reasonable *via media*. He discusses nowhere the psychological aspect of free will but takes his stand with Kant on the unconditional, moral imperative of our experiences. Our freedom is a necessary truth of reason if morality is to be preserved. On this basis he connects the Reidian and Berkeleian positions. He retains man's indubitable, originative power but also interprets ultimate existence in terms of our experience. The presupposition of this experience, and not any deduction therefrom, is the existence of infinite goodness and wisdom. Where Locke makes science of the causal an unutterable enigma, Fraser reiterates that it is "the venture of a faith that is rooted in the divine or moral constitution of the universe, inevitably presupposed in all our experience."[1] Berkeley, too, he corrects and revises by accepting the equal necessity of finite and of infinite causality. The importance attached by him to this

Berkeley, and Reid.

[1] "John Locke, etc.," in "Proceedings of the British Academy," 1903-4, p. 231.

tenet may be inferred from the following passage uttered in 1895, "The idea of natural causation being essentially divine is not new to me. It pervades the thought which I have given to the world in the last five-and-twenty years, for it is implied in six volumes of which Berkeley was the text, and in three in which I have essayed a critical reconstruction of Locke."[1] In fact, this theory that natural causation is not a mere phenomenal series but the manifestation of mind is the supplement to, and divides chief attention in his system with, the call to philosophic faith.

The true form of the argument.

We would recognise the argument as valid and indisputable. The presuppositions of our common experience cannot be reasoned about. But we would demur to an occasional laxness of expression. He seems at times to base his conclusion on our empirical consciousness of remorse and moral obligatories. These, apparently, would disappear if evil or, as he repeatedly calls it, "that which ought not to be" did not exist. Evil, again, is the inevitable corollary of finitude and personality, as we shall see. Morality and, therefore, the implied postulates are thus ultimately dependent on our personality being finite and would disappear with its infinity and perfection. *A fortiori,* we cannot assume goodness in any analogous sense to Deity. Provided, however, we rested our reasoning not on actual evil and remorse, but on the individual's recognition of himself as self-determining, we could postulate at least a like freedom to the infinite being. Our own experience of the absolute character of the categorical moral imperative would necessitate a no less moral character in the divine purposes.

## THE DIVINE IN ITS RELATION TO THE HUMAN.

With God partially manifesting Himself in the unbeginning and unbounded physical universe, and man acquainted with him through his participation

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. I., p. 249.

in this material life and in immediate moral experience, what form does the relationship of the ego to the divine take?

Finite minds probably not created.

At the outset, we may remark that no theory of creation of the individual self is propounded, indeed the presumption seems to lie in the direction of its everlasting nature as well as that of matter. This at least leaves open the hypothesis of a pluralistic universe, a favourite conception with several modern British and American authors and founded, according to Professor James, on the testimony of common-sense.

Early immaterialism and later modifications. The analogical argument to be corrected by an ontological belief.

Further, matter inanimate or animate represents the only channel of our *knowledge*—in the restricted sense—of the supreme power, even as it forms the main medium of connection and communication between finite minds. Instead of concealing God from us, the material universe partly reveals His methods of operating, and not completely, simply because it is incapable of perfect representation. In line with Berkeley in his fourth dialogue Fraser is very fond of using the analogical argument. In his earlier years he adopts it more or less uncritically, but modifies it after more profound study. "The phenomena [of constant relation between sights and feelings] accordingly afford us the same proof that the whole world of visible sense is grounded in mind, and, as it were, personated, which we have that the audible or visible words or actions of our fellowmen are so."[1] At that time, too, he represented a more dogmatic attitude than later he admits possible or satisfactory. "The universe in this philosophy [Reflective Realism] is a universe of MINDS, which communicate with one another through sensible symbols. These symbols each mind can so modify in other minds, as that these others become conscious of the induced modifications, and are able thereby

[1] N.B. Review, 1862. Berkeley, Theory of Vision, p. 229.

to infer their conscious causes; while all the minds, and all the sense, given phenomena, are in an established harmony under Supreme Mind."[1] (This immaterialism is nowhere so emphasised as in these words.) He seems, indeed, to secede definitely to a less speculative realism when he admits that "The actual existence whether of things or of individual persons—may only mean that neither things nor persons are actually states or phenomena of God, the third presupposed reality. Visible material things must be somehow other than only conscious states of persons." (Philosophy of Theism, vol. ii., p. 195.) Although stating the analogical argument several times afterwards, he comes to see its fallacious nature. "Without a previous assumption of the perfection or infinity of God, this analogical reasoning, which Berkeley so beautifully unfolds, can carry us only to an inadequate conclusion . . . The argument presupposes the trustworthiness of the Power that is continually addressing us in the language of the senses. This universal language can afford no evidence of the continued veracity of the unknown speaker, which is the main thing for us."[2] Yet in thus throwing overboard any physical analogy he, in reality, but refunds it into a deeper interpretation. To avoid nescience, it is true we must *postulate* a perfectly trustworthy moral governor as the fount of causation, but our conception of this being is drawn analogically from our own moral experience. "Indeed, a spiritually perfect man seems to be man's inadequate, yet highest attainable conception of the *character* of God."[3] Thus the physical analogy is sublimated into a wider moral and spiritual analogy not merely from our sense perception but from our whole experience. We recognise ourselves in contact

[1] N.B. Review, 1865. On Mill's Examination of Sir W. Hamilton, p. 26.

[2] Berkeley, B. P. C., p. 167.

[3] Hibbert Journal, 1907, Our final Venture, p. 252.

with a reality which must be personal and free and cannot be unrighteous or our scientific and philosophic faith is vain.

Teleology and Science.

This faith, too, backed by the undivided criterion, effects the reconciliation of this divine moral agency and the physical chain of secondary causes. It interprets the latter teleologically or purposively as the means to some end, which the former, according to the essense of personal action, has ideally constructed for realisation. What appeared ultimately to conflict, yet exists in ourselves united, faith unifies also in God, by a revision of the superficial and partial explanation in the light of the deeper and more embracing one.

Finite minds are not parts of the divine.

It would be profitless to ask if God knows us only through the interpretation of visible signs, but difficulty occurs when we attempt to delimit the mutual boundary between the action of the finite, causal sources and the divine agency. Common-sense or philosophic faith seems content with a realist statement of things as they are. No theory of emanation or of Hegelian idealism is discussed, but the matter always left to faith. The hypothesis of a God expressing himself in us and at the same time to us, *i.e.* both percipient subject (ego) and perceived object (nature)—and unconsciously so—is untenable at the human point of view. Although this preserves self-consciousness to God it (*a*) splits up his consciousness into parts which contradicts the unity of self-consciousness, and of these parts no number, however large, could equivalate an omniscience, and (*b*) makes his own manifestation only partially intelligible to himself. In short, infinite self-consciousness expresssing itself in finite, limited forms is a *contradictio in adjecto*. In addition, moral consciousness affirms the independence of the individual on the divine. Man acts free of complete external necessitation; he can defy God and produce the ought-not-to-be.

Inconceivability of omnipotence permitting finite freedom

Fraser sides, however, with Hamilton against Reid. Both admit the reality of human freedom in man's relations with the divine, but while Reid maintains its conceivability, Hamilton asserts its inexplicable mystery. "The application of a merely human intelligence to solve the relation of finite and transcendent Being must end either in Pantheism or in Atheism," neither of which satisfy our criterion. "We are left oscillating between an *Infinite* universe and a *Finite-Absolute* universe."[1] "A Being that cannot be logically limited may exist, and beings within the logical limits—finite beings—may also exist."[2] "Does not [the true opinion] recognise our knowledge of the *facts*—finite beings and the Transcendent Being—which occasion the difficulty on one hand, and, on the other, the impossibility of any solution of their relation by human understanding."[3]

Summary.

The *homo mensura* has brought us to the above imperfect yet practically reliable solution, and we may sum up in his own words. "[Our answer] means that the deepest and truest thought man can have about the outside world is that in which the natural universe is conceived as the immediate manifestation of the divine or infinite Person, in moral relation to imperfect persons, who, in and through their experience of what is, are undergoing intellectual and spiritual education in really divine surroundings—the education in part consisting in struggles to master by obeying the physical nature with which they are continually in contact and collision, and which, in the light of their inner consciousness, is seen to be a revelation of the divine. It may thus be said that man may know God, and also that God cannot be known. And this blended knowledge and ignorance, real knowledge of that which yet passes knowledge, seems to be the final issue of human inquiry as to the co-existence of the three existences postulated in common experience."[4]

[1] Essays IV., pp. 237-8. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 235. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 221.

[4] Philosophy of Theism, vol. I., pp. 280-281.

## EVIL: THE ENIGMA OF THEISM.

The conflict of evil with divine omnipotent goodness.

Into this theistic paradise of bright sunshine and goodness the serpent enters. The harmony presupposed by conscience is marred by the persistent discord of evil. Pain and suffering and sorrow, illness and death can be accounted for as necessary means to an acceptable end. They might be transitory stages in the great march of the eternal purpose of infinite goodness, but the nullification of the unity of the moral universe by sin does not permit of such a specious justification. That a universe which is the manifestation of a supreme moral power should contain, even in this little corner of it, that which is definitely and unconditionaly immoral is the final enigma of theism. It reads like a contradiction in terms, and, in its seeming inconsistence, tends to destroy absolute ethical faith in the ultimate trustworthiness of God, instigating, therefore, an agnostic pessimism.

Insufficiency of several proposed solutions.

Several proposed solutions are shown to be inadmissible. A Manichean dualism as the final word on being does despite to the insistent requirements of our moral faith that the divine and eternal is purely righteousness; no greater satisfaction can be claimed for a resolute Monism, whose supreme principle must be either imperfectly moral or utterly indifferent. On the other hand, any theory whose explanation is based on, or results in, the absolute necessity or illusoriness of evil contradicts the voice of conscience. Moral obligation and remorse unhesitatingly affirm that evil *ought* not to be in human experience, whatever good purpose pain and sorrow may serve, and "Reason is paralysed by the supposition that truth and falsehood, beneficence and cruelty, justice and injustice, are indifferent in the universal system and are imposed on man only by human limitations."[1] How then can we reconcile the inherent moral depravity, which is

[1] Berkeley and Spiritual Realism, p. 76.

apparently increasing, with the previously adopted theistic optimism?

Evil is based on the free personality of man.

The answer is reached by analysing the essence of evil. Fraser's only definition is "that which *ought not to be*," *i.e.*, that which conflicts with the moral consciousness or sense of duty of the individual. If, then, man is "foreordained" or "predestinated" or "eternally necessitated" evil is refunded into the divine causality, but if his will is free and transcends the chain of equivalent events, he is himself responsible.

To this previous question we have already received partial answer. In his moral actions as we saw man exhibits himself as distinct from, and not inextricably involved in the concatenation of physical phenomena. So far only as he is a *thing* is his complex nature governed by natural law; inasmuch as his true being is personal, he cannot plead irrefragable necessitation but acquires responsibility for his actions.[1]

A universe of persons is more perfect than one which merely consists of things: and with personality the possibility of evil is introduced.

On the side towards God the difficulty is somewhat similarly solved. Fraser prefers the common-sense view, which leaves us not merely emanations of the divine mind, but separate from, while semi-dependent upon it. In this he has a predecessor in Reid who supports the divine perfection along with a sin-stained universe. "We are apt," says Reid, "to think it possible that God might have made a universe of sensible and rational creatures, into which neither natural nor moral evil should ever enter."[2] This he decries, and Fraser too argues that the existence of evil, instead of contradicting divine goodness, vindicates God's moral perfection as the infinite moral power manifested in the phenomenal metamorphoses. A world of things physically necessitated, and all indifferent, occupies a lower level of existence than one in which exist "individual persons, excercising responsible freedom," and able to "produce volitions which *they* ought not to have produced, and which are

[1] *Vide* Philosophy of Theism, vol. II,. pp. 10 ff. [2] Letter to Price.

opposed to eternal moral reason or divine will." [1] He points out that this is a revised version of the Leibnizian position expounded in the Theodicée.[2] With Leibniz, evil does not contradict the essential goodness of divine wisdom, but, instead of it being an absolute or even relative good, partially justified to our intelligence from its good results, evil becomes with Fraser the not impossible but eternally to be condemned correlate of finite, free personality. The perfect ideal, which validates the existence of persons, includes necessarily the possibility of acts whose motives contradict the conception of the ought-to-be.

Reason's failure at reconciliation is transcended by the assurance of faith.

Long before, in 1855, he had discussed the question at issue between free-will and divine necessitation and found the solution to lie in the nature of cause. "The causal necessity," he concludes, "is found to contain in its bosom . . . the incomprehensible character that belongs to Eternity," and asks "Can speculation accomplish more, towards our extrication from a dilemma that has made Augustinianism the centre of so much debate, than is implied in the proof which it thus *can* offer of the essential incomprehensibility of the very words in which that dilemma is expressed?" [3] Here he stands on a similar platform with Kant in the affirmation of the arrest of reason in dealing with causality. But he conjoins in a closer tie the results of the first and second Critiques and passes beyond them because of his indomitable faith in reason and experience. "By common sense the mystery of divine power, and the mystery of our originality as agents, are *both* accepted in their integrity," [4] although "that mysterious idea [of Eternity] necessarily conceals from man a positive theory of their *ultimate* relation." [5] Having once gained freedom for the finite individual by an appeal

[1] Philosophy of Theism, Vol. II., p. 178. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 185. [3] Essays V., p. 275. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 280. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

to the dictates of our common-sense and an exposal of our ignorance, the way was cleared for the further step of the reference of evil to the free, responsible persons, which he took in his riper years.

The failure of a merely empirical generalisation

This manner of conserving theistic optimism constitutes a decided advance on the old apologists and also upon his own philosophic father Berkeley. They believed that by a general survey of the good and evil which exists, it could be shown that the good preponderated. From this the inference was made to the righteous Love of God. Fraser points out the fallacious and untrustworthy character of this reasoning if God be considered omnipotent, and reaffirms that the rationality and morality of the universe must be *presupposed* in any such argumentation. He makes, too, the most of an incidental reference in Berkeley to including under our review the originating power of morally free, finite personalties, and restates his own position as the development of this slight clue. "The risks involved in the existence and independent activity of moral agents thus responsible for their acts, may sufficiently account for present manifestation of evil under Theistic Optimism."[1]

*Reductio ad absurdum* of an exclusive divine causation.

As against the semi-pantheistic idealism of Hegel and some of his followers, we think an indicated line of *reductio ad absurdum* reasoning might have been more emphasised. God cannot be the real cause of *our* responsible acts. If we were to assume or prove our complete dependence on the divine power we would thereby destroy the very ladder on which we had risen to the morality of the infinite power. Our originating will or the consciousness of our ability to produce the ought-not-to-be enabled us to postulate a moral reality as the ultimate; having reached this conclusion we must not expose the foundations to be fictitious or the whole fabric will collapse. If the individual does not possess freedom, we cannot conclude to a divine moral power.

[1] Berkeley and Spiritual Realism, p. 84.

In the light of this fully developed position we are able better to understand the emphasis Fraser lays on the necessity for assuming the moral character of the causal agent. On the mere analogy of our personal experience, we can have no guarantee that God is unconditionally good. Freedom involves the possibility of evil as well as moral responsibility and the proof of the possibility with us lies in the actual transgression. This abstract possibility is unhesitatingly allowed by Fraser, but, as we have seen, the faith of moral reason in itself sustains belief in its judgments and presuppositions. The question meets us again in the following paragraph.

## PROGRESS AND THEISTIC OPTIMISM.

Possibility of permanent universal degeneration.

This vindication of God's moral perfection at the expense of his exclusive original causality has raised a new element of difficulty. The presence in the universe of these numerous sources of causation, capable of evil and of resisting their divine ideal, interferes with a consistent moral view of the whole and permits of a continuous degeneration of individual persons and their permanently increasing resistance to the divine power of God. "The existence of persons, who, as persons under moral relations, must all be free to become permanently bad; who cannot by any power, divine or other, be hindered from becoming bad, without being reduced to irresponsible things, seems to imply the possibility at last of a universe in which all persons have become irrevocably bad."[1] Fraser admits the abstract possibility of logical disproof. "The reason for the actual existence of God, and of the universe of things and persons in which He is revealing Himself, is the insoluble problem; and, without solving *it*, we cannot be sure that our knowledge is complete enough to show that

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., pp. 197-8.

even a moral world composed of persons who have made themselves permanently wicked would be necessarily inconsistent with the divine ideal."[1]

The facts of progress only supplement our presupposition of ultimate moral perfection.

In the presence of this incomprehensible our unyielding filial trust sustains us in the conviction that all things finally work together for good. Our moral faith finds resting ground as well in our experience. The testimony of historical and empirical advance in scientific knowledge and philosophic thought, and the gradual elevation of the moral ideal suggest the final practical realisation of the divine righteous aim in this world, even though the patent fact of the "*struggle with evil,* more or less successful, yet somehow on the way to infinitely good and righteous issues,"[2] cannot give the desired absolute certainty. Scientific teleological faith in progress and evolution implies and strengthens theistic faith in the trustworthiness of the universe, but no empirically generalised observations can prove either. They are presuppositions of rational personality.

Theistic faith a chief factor in human advancement.

"In the only permanent and humanly progressive philosophy many things must in the end be left abrupt."[3] Yet in all the alternating retrogressions and forward impulses of philosophy and life "theistic faith in the universal system, according to which the temporal procedure is an incompletely comprehensible development of the Divine Idea,"[4] has accepted these anomalies and yet proved the fundamental factor in the progressive improvement of man. In the depths of our ignorance, confusion, and almost despair, we are comforted and upheld by a sweet and reasonable filial belief "that ever-advancing discoveries of natural meanings, and of natural relations of means and ends, are concrete embodiments of abstract conditions imposed by intelligence; and that these last conduct to the final conception in the faith that the Whole is the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 198-9. [2] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., p. 200.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 212. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

expression of perfectly good and wise power or morally intending active Reason."[1]

Is not the true solution a divine-human co-operation?

Now, our reason does conjecture "a teleological conception of things and persons," and faith, based on personal experience, might indicate that the issue would be the final eradication of evil. Experience teaches us, however, that the only life which can be called moral essentially involves a conflict. Here, then, the difficulty of reason in conceiving an infinite personality who yet cannot be said to be free in the sense in which we are free (*i.e.*, to will contrary to knowledge), arises more forcibly. Unless evil be indubitably due to finitude, in which case free-will seems also a prerogative of finite persons and God seems lacking in complete personality, to our mind the more rational view—on the above difficulty—is the pragmatist position. "Perfection, in other words, may not be eternal; rather are things working towards it as an ideal; and God himself may be one of the co-workers."[2] Nowhere explicitly denied by Fraser, in this particular chapter of his system such an attitude seems undoubtedly implicitly approved of. It is also in line with his countenancing the general pragmatic attitude of Pluralism.

## THE PLACE OF MIRACLES IN A THEISTIC UNIVERSE.

Miracles are not capricious interventions of Deity, but manifestations of deeper natural power than the physical.

There is a certain class of events in the history of mankind which has always been held to strengthen faith in its splendid isolation. Miracles, or as Fraser defines them, events which transcend human knowledge of the laws of "nature" do not, on the deepest view, conflict with but rather supplement the theistic conception of the universe. As isolated appearances in the world, supposedly contradictory to, or not finally explicable by any possible laws of natural causation,

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[1] James, Introduction to Höffding, "The Problem of Philosophy," p. ix.

he admits they could be of no value as a theistic proof. They are—if so regarded — discredited by advancing science, by the interval of time between the latest examples and the present day, the consequent impossibility of verification, and even by theistic faith itself, which presupposes the universe to be completely and morally uniform and trustworthy. Yet even on this limited level they are not annihilated by any *a priori* batteries nor by the destructive criticism of the physical sciences. Philosophy, on the contrary, emphasises the fallaciousness of assuming that "the physically conditioned activity of the Supreme Power or Divine Spirit is the only sort of Divine activity that is reasonable."[1] Teleology, itself, implies a view of nature which is not finally expressible in physical terms. But miracles are not capricious interventions. Inasmuch as the universe reveals the divine being manifesting himself partially to us, natural causation itself is an eternal miracle. Its sources and its ultimate regulative laws are not intellectually comprehended by man. That being so, "the existence of individual persons—moral forces—may make reasonable an unfolding of divine purpose larger than that which appears in physical causation measured by sensuous intelligence."[2]

The Christian dispensation may finally be natural and yet miraculous.

The Christian religion provides the most striking and believable examples of the "supernatural or marvellous" and they can claim the most favourable verdict from moral faith. They are "determined by (their) relations especially to persons who have made themselves bad in neglecting their true ideal, so that their theistic faith and hope has to be awakened, vivified, and enlightened in order to their moral recovery — all through divine incarnation in the perfect Man, in consummation of the divine incarnation in physical nature."[3] But even though Christianity

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. ii., p. 232.

[2] Philosophy of Theism, vol. ii., p. 236.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

were shown to be natural it would not prejudice its divinity but lead to a revision of meaning in the term "nature." Reid and, more especially, Berkeley develop this line of argument in their later thought, while Hegel has made it peculiarly his own.

## THE MYSTERY OF DEATH.

Immortality can neither be proved nor disproved. It is but a confidence based on God's goodness.

"Furthermore, sceptical disintegration of theistic faith may be arrested by the consideration that the temporal drama of personal life on the planet is not extended enough in time to justify or explain its own final meaning and issues."[1] The venture of a rational faith provides again the only exit in the face of the intellectually insoluble problem. That psychophysical science renders dubitable our belief in the continuous existence of the conscious individual life after the dissolution of the organism through which it manifests itself here, is a common-place. Other analogical arguments drawn from the natural sphere serve to confirm the doubt. Further, abstract speculation at the most can only lead, as with Kant, to a critical suspension of the judgment, and no *a posteriori* proof of immortality can be possible. "But a confinement of reason which excludes, as necessarily irrational, the widespread expectation that personal consciousness will exist after death, may be due to dogmatic narrowness of mind."[2] Even as the rising of the sun to-morrow, unexperienced as yet, is rationally involved in our present physical or phenomenal experience, so is "the conscious life after death of a person who has not yet died" involved in "our present moral and religious experience."[3] We return as before to moral faith in the providence that shapes our ends. With an almost universal belief in a life continuous with this beyond the grave prevalent in humanity, it would indicate a gratuitous deceptive-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 281. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[3] Berkeley, B.P.C., p. 84.

ness in the universal power, at variance with its presupposed unexceptionable, moral reliability. *A priori*, of course, men are not so indispensable in God's universe as God himself. Yet our hope for endless life is steadfastly based on the justice and goodness of the divine mind.

Considerations which favour immortality.

Certain characteristics, too, of persons cause a predilection in favour of posthumous survival, such as, the involuntary entrance of persons into a world of probation in which they are responsible for the management of themselves, their incomplete fulfilment of the task which seems to be set them here, and the sudden, involuntary withdrawal from the life of sense, and all on a planet apparently laboriously prepared for their reception and moral training. "Such faith is not, indeed, like philosophical faith or theistic trust, the indispensable postulate of all reliable intercourse with the evolving universe of things and persons; but its sceptical disintegration may disturb this final faith, and so lead indirectly to universal doubt and pessimism."[1] The infinite love of God will not cast indifferently upon the void the most precious thing in His universe. To harbour the possibility of the disappearance of conscious personality would imperil our faith in His righteousness and personal existence. "The final extinction of persons, immediately after a short and dangerous life in this world of intermingled good and evil, and of apparently only preparatory discipline, in a moral struggle with temptations due to their finitude, is difficult to reconcile with faith in the divinity of the universal evolution."[2] The final issues, however, are hid from mortal intellects. "We have but faith, we cannot know, for knowledge is of things we see," yet we believe that sometime, somewhere, a larger development of life awaits those who "do justly,

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., p. 264.

[2] Hibbert Journal, 1907. "Our Final Venture," p. 256.

and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God."

Pre-existence not denied.

Fraser's leanings to a pluralism are again evident in this section, for he encourages the assumption that pre-existence is not at variance with theistic faith "Perhaps more than can now be recollected by each person may have proceded, in the pre-natal history of persons who seem disposed, when they enter life, to keep themselves bad. The semblance of moral chaos on this planet, so unsatisfying and disintegrating of moral trust in the Power universally at work, seems to be causally connected with the history of the moral agents after the curtain falls in death, if not also before it was raised at birth."[1] To us, indeed, it seems more logical than the generally current belief in an absolute creation at birth of a being, which, having once been called into existence, cannot or may not be exterminated. The absence of all definite recollection of a previous existence is scarcely a greater difficulty than the conception of a continuous, identical memory without the similar visible organism. Perhaps, in the beyond, our consciousness will be connected, so to say, "subconsciously," with our experience here.

Reincarnation possible to realise our ideal perfection.

That being so, we are not surprised to find that the possibility of reincarnation is not negatived. As he draws nearer the border his vision seems to dwell more lovingly upon these problems of eschatology, for only in the work published in his ninetieth year does he hint at the conception. "The accomplishment of supreme beneficent purpose for each individual agent through the independent will entrusted to each—imperfectly realised in this life—may even be the result not of present struggles and failures only, but of a succession of lives of which the present is only one."[2] "May not a prolonged purgatory," he

[1] Philosophy of Theism, vol. II., p. 281. [2] Berkeley and Spiritual Realism, p. 58.

says again, "begun if not completed in this embodied life on earth, and continued, it may be, through unknown periods after the death of those bodies, —may not this be the optimist way to the final perfection of the individual character."[1] There is something pathetic in the picture of the old man with his hard work nearly done looking forward to resuming it where death breaks it off.

## III. SUMMARY OF FRASER'S POSITION: HIS RELATION TO BRITISH SPECULATION.

His independence and ignorance of continental results.

IN Scottish philosophy Fraser represents the sober, level-headed, critical Scottish character. He rears his philosophic system on the direct foundations of a line of native predecessors, while about him his contemporaries find their resort in continental speculation. Thus the allegation of Ueberweg-Heinze as to His dependence on the later German theists must not be accepted without due reserve. He follows more the Berkeleian development of Locke's theory than the Hegelian, and the destructive influence of Kant reached him, if at all, only after his mind had been prepared for what it had to teach by Sir W. Hamilton's speculations. That his results are somewhat parallel to, if less pretentiously exact than those of his German contemporaries, *e.g.*, Lotze, cannot be denied. But the continuity of development of the main thesis from his earliest writings to his latest shows an independence of thought and judgment. Remembering how very imperfectly the great continental philosophers were known in Scotland at the beginning of Fraser's career, one must look rather for similarities than for any pronounced dependence. In fact, Fraser's genius is not merely British, but was almost wholly moulded under English and Scottish influences. Descartes he knew, but read

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

him in the light of the criticism of Locke and Berkeley and Reid. Leibniz probably confirmed him in the doctrine of a theistic universe with free, finite personalities, which is but the common property of all Christian belief. Kant, on the one hand, and Hegel on the other were tested on the touchstone of commonsense, itself not unrelated to Descartes' *lumen naturale*. References to Bacon, Locke and Hume abound in his writings, and the Scottish philosophers Reid, Brown, Calderwood and Hamilton, were always in his mind. On the other hand, except for an early essay on the philosophy of Leibnez, whose works he received from his professor in his student days, there is only incidental mention of the German writers. Cousin, the brilliant if somewhat superficial expositor and Frenchifier of a number of their works, was his personal friend, but the respect was extended in only a modified form to his opinions. Fraser's appointment to a Scottish chair as against the older and more brilliant Ferrier, we may remark, was undoubtedly due to a belief that the latter's theological views were tainted with dread, Hegelian heresy, while Fraser was reared in true, British orthodoxy and had remained staunch.

His advance on Reid and Berkeley and correction of Hegel and Hamilton.

We have seen how he expands and deepens Reid's conception of the function of Common-sense. No longer should it decide only about the reality of external perception but as to the actual constitution of the universe; whether it must remain strictly unknowable or only incompletely comprehensible but satisfactory at least to the theistic postulate of moral faith. Berkeley's preoccupation with the impotence of matter he also corrects; in the first place by his later admission of the abstract semi-independence of matter both of us and of God. The laws of nature are physical means by which God realises his purposes to us in an infinite number of particular cases, as much and as little essential characteristics of his innermost being as of ours. In the second place he

develops the mystic ideas of Berkeley in Siris to a definite position. "Fraser's one object has been to make what was subjective [in Berkeley] objective, to transform a crab on the shore into the cancer in the sky."[1] The reality we come into contact with is ultimately explicable in terms of universal mind, whose highest interpretation for us we find in man. He avoids, on the other hand, the pitfalls of the Hegelian dialectic. Finite personality preserves its separatedness. Moral will and human originative purpose retain their indestructible character as in the Scottish philosophers. The affirmation that reconciliation of divine omnipotence and human freedom is abstractly inconceivable follows Kant and Sir W. Hamilton rather than Stewart and Cousin. This reiterated assurance of the insufficiency of reason to fathom reality reminds us of its exaggeration in Bayle. Fraser does not proceed, however, to base our religious confidence on reason's powerlessness, but agrees with Locke that he who takes away reason to make way for revelation "puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if he would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to perceive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope." He bases his position, indeed, on reason's inviolable trust in itself, despite the antinomies inherent in our knowledge. We cannot doubt that experience introduces us to real existence. To do so logically involves us in final nescience, the only alternative to which is the acceptance of reason's certainty and its postulates of a finally theistic universe; and "the knowledge that 'God is love' is the deepest expression of theistic faith in the principle of the universe."[2]

The three correlated existences.

Thus he is preserved from the idolatry of the unknowable which Spencer founds on Hamilton's doctrine of the Unconditioned, and equally from the

[1] J. H. Stirling, Mind, 1905. Review of "Biographia Philosophica," p. 92.

[2] Philosophical Review, 1896, p. 569: Philosophical Faith.

issue of the latter in the *impasse* of subjective idealism. Existence consists not merely of the experience of conscious persons and an indefinable, unknowable beyond, but of an interrelated system of three not further reducible realities—God, matter, and the self. Two of these are essentially active and originative, while the third introduces the necessary element of passivity and resistance.

Our notions of these are not thoroughly examined and articulated,—in fact Fraser seems to have little or no interest in modern psychological investigation,—but each is accepted in its semi-dependent integrity. Annihilate one of them or transmute one into a form of another and some part of our conscious experience is based on confusion and illusion.

His position an hypothesis,

We see, too, that our author's philosophy resolves itself virtually into an attitude towards existence with a positive and a negative side. A practical suspension of the intellect in the face of infinite being finds a welcome coadjutor in difficulties in a philosophical faith. Our final ignorance is corrected by the belief of reason in its own trustworthiness, and our limited view-point gains a needed completion from reason's presuppositions. The ultimate position may be categorised as a hypothesis: "Provided reason is not doomed to final deception, we must assume that we are living partially independent existences in a theistic universe."

or a system of postulates. The *via media* of faith.

This is not at all akin to Locke's system of probabilities. It accepts Kant's "universality and necessity" for our experience, and, furthermore, affirms that that experience is welded to reality. If we like to call it the method of postulates we indicate thereby the intimate connection with the latest phases of modern thought. It is modest, but not hesitating; strong in its own convictions, but not arbitrarily disregarding the limits of reasonableness. In all respects the choice tends towards the emphasised *via media* between a tyrranous assumption of omnipotence and

a cowardly policy of nescience or agnosticism. Faith is the healer of the breaches of knowledge, the faith of reason in itself, based on the fact that reality to be known must have intelligence innate within it, and to be trustworthy must be morally good. What we mean by "good" connotes no fixed idea but grows progressively. Never can it fall short of the highest that our experience requires, the best we know.

Lack of precision the result of this conciliatory position.

This policy of the *via media* accounts for much of the indefiniteness of his philosophy when confronted with particular questions. It is certainly the pure common-sense attitude. A systematic mind, searching for detailed utterances on important minor problems would occasionally feel irritated at the lack of minuteness and conclusive affirmation. But the middle way is ever difficult to reconcile with precision. The truth is, that, with all its attractiveness Fraser's position is, as remarked by Professor Seth, "essentially tentative and unsystematic, and the result of an intense appreciation of the sceptical difficulties which beset the entire metaphysical question."[1] The main outlines, we have endeavoured to show, are, however, clearly stated, indeed their repetition in books and articles would be monotonous, did we not feel surging through the call to faith and moderation the intense moral earnestness of the author.

Seemingly opposed to this critical standpoint we have his unhesitating, almost childlike, acceptance of finite, originative power on the certainty of which he builds his ontology. If we press him far enough we cannot but conclude that like Kant and like Lotze of his contemporaries, his metaphysic is founded on ethics. The moral postulates are the most prominent and overshadow the scientific. Both, indeed, have the same quality of resting on an incontestible faith but the scientist's faith itself presupposes moral faith in the ground of real being. Cosmical conviction depends

[1] Phil. Review 1896, Review of "Philosophy of Theism," vol. I.

upon our confidence in the inseparable relation of our purposes to the scheme of things. "God is Good" is the fundamental faith-venture in which man has to live."[1]

Teleological Realism.

We need not raise the question as to whether in this attempt to extend the primate of the practical reason over the world of science he has not robbed the latter of its ideal necessity. If he seems to some to debase the phenomenal certitude, to others it must appear a needful reconciliation,—a *via media*—and, indeed, an elevation, to include the whole finally within the sphere of the "Vernunftglaube." The question might be approached, as he himself treats it, from the point of view which urges that teleology, which is the essence of will, neither negates nor renders superfluous a mechanical causation, but rather presents a new interpretation of the latter in terms of purpose. Values are in course of realisation, good is the ground and goal of all reality. This "spiritual" or, as we may here interpret it, "teleological" realism would afford the basis at least for that philosophy which, in his early days, he desires should be "spiritual yet not illusory, physical yet not merely mechanical."[2]

Faith not mystical, but equivalent to the highest reason.

We may point out, however, that Fraser's reiterated statement that we must apprehend the elements of being by faith does not proclaim him an adherent of mysticism. Like the Neoplatonists and the modern "Glaubensphilosophen" he perceives there are facts which condition our reasoning but which cannot be comprehended by the understanding. Unlike them and the true mystics, on the other hand, *e.g.* Eckhart and Boehme, the highest power we have of apprehending these mysteries is synonymous with reason itself. Reason, that is, not confined to the power of judging, of drawing conclusions, but humble to accept what it cannot grasp, reason in its widest significance. That he calls this reason "faith," the "irresistible impulse to believe," "rational intuition," "reasonable inspira-

[1] Berkeley's Works, 2nd Edition, vol. I., Introduction, p. 67.
[2] Essays IV., p. 191.

tion," does not modify our judgment. We confess that it may be counted unfortunate that, in the absense of a fixed terminology, he should include so much under the one designation. He himself asserts it is but a contest about a name[1] and that the traditional confinement of "knowledge" to the unmysterious and provable has caused him to adopt the title "faith," although in its generally accepted meaning, the term may seem empty of objective rationality. "If knowledge means omniscient physical science of the universe of reality, then the universe of reality *is* finally unknown and unknowable But if man *can* live in intelligible relations to what transcends natural science—call this which enables him so to live, 'knowledge,' 'science,' 'commonsense,' 'faith,' 'inspiration,' 'revelation,' 'feeling,' or 'reason,' —it is treasure found for the philosopher."[2] That without the presupposition of which we cannot exercise our understanding or lead a personal, moral life is as truly known as anything explicitly or implicitly based on it, even though it requires to be accepted by "faith."

His neglect of ethics.

We could desire a more precise explication of his ethical position than his own scattered statements. His explanation of evil is at best fragmentary. It does not indicate wherein the alleged conflict of good and evil lies, whether it be between duty and inclination, between our higher, universal, and our semi-universalised lower nature, between the categorical imperative and anticipation of pleasure. He tells us that the disposition or attitude of the person to the moral law is good, in the spirit of Kant and the Protestant Church in general, but he also incidentally allows a secondary goodness to actions according as they tend to realise a moral ideal. The two positions may perhaps be reconciled, according to his favourite method, by a *via media*. We may accept the moral

[1] *vide*, Phil. Review, 1896, p. 573, [2] "Reid" F.S. Series, p. 157.

ideal as the purposive content of our willing and the unconditional allegiance which each person's ideal requires individually of him, or its categorical imperative, as the form. With this assumption we can interpret the phrase—"the production of the ought-not-to-be"—as expressing this union of subjective and objective, of meaning and fact. Further than that and the presupposition of our freedom implied in our moral consciousness no details of an ethical system are presented. That, however, results from the pre-eminently metaphysical character of his interest. When he has once uncovered the fundamental moral postulate of freedom he inaugurates no further irrelevant discussion. Thus the psychological problem of free will is not dealt with, nor is Hedonism or Rationalism or virtue or any of the catchwords of moral philosophy considered.

The disregard of our emotional and aesthetic nature unexplained.

A further point. We are told that the entire personality is the clue to reality but find our emotional and æsthetic nature and their claims wholly disregarded. He does not introduce, in the manner of several eminent post-Kantians, our artistic contemplation of objects at once in their entirety and differentiation as an analogue for the intuitive knowledge of God. Nor do we learn how far our emotional nature may be predicated of the divine, although the attribute of ineffable love is, perhaps laxly, assigned to him. That side of our nature is, indeed, reduced to subservience to the moral, in that pain and suffering and sorrow may be explained as factors in the education of our character and will. Their origin is not introduced. Although on his own principles we certainly may treat them as consequences of the immoral, irrational use of our freedom, yet their purgatorial purpose in the scheme of things may, on the other hand, lead us to seek their source in the divine plan. With this unexplained but comprehensible double relation, this indistinct, unresolved *via media* we must rest content.

His attitude to religion. The relation of morality to religion.

From this we are drawn to remark on Fraser's theological leanings, the strength of which may be deduced from his results as well as from his education and early activity. So far, however, from accusing him of bias or dogmatism we are astonished at the merely incidental character of his references to religion. Nowhere do we discover statements of doctrinal theology, his speculations being concentrated on the grounds of all belief. Considering that his whole position culminates consistently in the religious attitude it is remarkable that he neither discusses this latter nor distinguishes it from our other attitudes to reality. It is a common fault of Scottish philosophers generally that they are too anxious and reserved in the sphere of religion and theology. But, in addition to this, we may be permitted to find the true rationale of our author's omission in the fact that his theistic faith or the "whole man" attitude is itself the true inwardness of the religious relation. Science, he maintains, tends towards an all-inclusive unity which morality rationalises and personalises, ultimately reaching a Weltanschauung which may without violence be identified with the Christian "God" in its philosophical purity. Since we have reached this ideal reality by means of our immediately experienced moral activity, it would involve a circle to deduce therefrom our attitude towards it. Yet faith, of the essence of reason, indeed, and not of feeling or religious devotion, wide enough, however, to embrace them in its sweep, is itself required in our acceptance of this view of existence. Morality and religion are, in fact, related as bud to flower or stand in the organic reciprocity of whole and part. The springs and assurances of morality well forth from a trust that ultimate existence is at least no less than the perfection of the part we experience in our own immediate intuitions. Our moral actions are philosophically grounded in the belief in God, towards whose perfection we strive in our deeds. Conversely, the divine tree

with its invisible branches stretching out into infinity, eternity, omniscience and immanent righteous power sways about with every north wind of science or arid breeze of speculation, but, rooted deep in man's moral nature, shall stand and flourish till personality decays and duty is unknown. We would almost like to say, parodying Erdmann's defence of Descartes, that morality is the ground of the knowledge of God and God is the ground for the existence of morality.

Optimism and immortality.

With this conviction we can face the evil and degeneration prevalent in the world, hoping for, and believing in the last, long triumph of good. This our theistic optimism transcends in its stimulating effect the empirical, eudæmonistic optimism of Berkeley, but tempers Leibniz's naive, uncritical, and Hegel's metaphysical optimism by emphasising the disturbing irresolvable element of evil—a *via media*. The inexplicable possibility of our rebellion against knowledge of the right and ideals of action exists, but must yield before the divine love and a lengthened moral education. We, on our part, must refuse to class ourselves under the category of "thinghood," resoluble without residium into the fleeting, causal series of metamorphoses, and must assert our true dignity as free, moral, responsible persons with an inexorable and infinite duty. Personal immortality, on ethical and religious grounds and not on the metaphysical or "psychological" basis of the middle ages, of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and other predecessors of Kant, we expect to be ours for us to execute our tasks. We cannot even deny that the probationary, purgatorial character of our life here may be indefinitely prolonged in further not very dissimilar experiences.

"We live by faith: we cannot know,"

for

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be.
They are but broken lights of Thee
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

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A slight character-sketch is given of A. C. Fraser among others by *J. M. Barrie* in "An Edinburgh Eleven."

## LEBENSLAUF.

Ich, John Kellie, bin zu Kilmarnock in Schottland als Sohn des Kaufmanns R. Muir Kellie und Janet Smith, am 4 Februar 1883 geboren. Mit fünf Jahren besuchte ich die "Academy" in meiner Vaterstadt, wo ich bis zu meinem siebzehnten Jahre unterrichtet wurde,—vom dreizehnten Jahre an die "Secondary School." (=Gymnasium). Als ich das "Leaving Certificate" (Reifezeugnis) in Latein, Griechisch, Englisch—Sprache and Literatur,—Mathematik, Physik, Chemie, Zeichenkunst erhalten hatte, bezog ich Oktober, 1900 die Universität zu Edinburgh. Nach vierjährigem Studium in der philosophischen Fakultät erwarb ich den Titel eines "Magister Artium" (M. A. cum laude) worauf ich in die theologische Fakultät übertrat. Drei Jahre lang studierte ich Theologie, ward nach Ablegung des Examens April 1907 "Baccalaureus Divinitatis," (B.D.) und ward einen Monat später von der Established Church of Scotland zum Vikar ernannt. Da während der Sommersemester an schottischen theologischen Fakultäten keine Vorlesungen staatfinden, so benutzte ich das S.S. 1905 dazu, in einer Mission auf dem Lande ("Summer

Mission") mitzuarbeiten, während ich S.S. 1906 an der Universität Marburg Theologie and deutsche Sprache studierte. S.S. 1907 lag ich an der Universität Heidelberg theologischen und philosophischen Studien ob, ebenso W.S. 1907/8 an der Berliner Universität. S.S. 1908 und W.S. 1908/9 war ich sodann an der Universität Erlangen immatrikuliert, wo ich haupt sächlich philosophische, daneben auch theologische Studien getrieben habe. Mit besonderer Freude and Anregung habe ich die philosophischen Vorlesungen der Herren Professoren Dr. Falckenberg und Hensel gehört. Ich bekenne mich zur schottisch-evangelischen Konfession.